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BY

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Pages from a Journal, with other Papers.

A VISIT TO CARLYLE IN 1868

ON Saturday, the 22nd of March, 1868, my father and I called on Carlyle at 5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, with a message from one of his intimate friends.

We were asked upstairs at once, and found Carlyle at breakfast. The room was large, well-lighted, a bright fire was burning, and the window was open in order to secure complete ventilation. Opposite the fireplace was a picture of Frederick the Great and his sister. There were also other pictures which I had not time to examine. One of them Carlyle pointed out. It was a portrait of the Elector of Saxony who assisted Luther. The letters V.D.M.I.Æ. ("Verbum Dei Manet in Æternum") were

round it. Everything in the room was in exact order, there was no dust or confusion, and the books on the shelves were arranged in perfect *evenness*. I noticed that when Carlyle replaced a book he took pains to get it level with the others. The furniture was solid, neat, and I should think expensive. I showed him the letter he had written to me eighteen years ago. It has been published by Mr. Froude, but it will bear reprinting. The circumstances under which it was written, not stated by Mr. Froude, were these. In 1850, when the Latter-day Pamphlets appeared—how well I remember the eager journey to the bookseller for each successive number!—almost all the reviews united in a howl of execration, criticism so called. I, being young, and owing so much to Carlyle, wrote to him, the first and almost the only time I ever did anything of the kind, assuring him that there was at least one person who believed in him. This was his answer :—

"CHELSEA, *9th March*, 1850.

"MY GOOD YOUNG FRIEND,—I am much obliged by the regard you entertain for me ;

and do not blame your enthusiasm, which well enough beseems your young years. If my books teach you anything, don't mind in the least whether other people believe it or not; but do you for your own behoof lay it to heart as a real acquisition you have made, more properly, as a real message left with you, which *you* must set about fulfilling, whatsoever others do! This is really all the counsel I can give you about what you read in my books or those of others: *practise* what you learn there; instantly and in all ways begin turning the belief into a fact, and continue at that—till you get more and ever more beliefs, with which also do the like. It is idle work otherwise to write books or to read them.

"And be not surprised that 'people have no sympathy with you'; that is an accompaniment that will attend you all your days if you mean to lead an earnest life. The 'people' could not save you with their 'sympathy' if they had never so much of it to give; a man can and must save himself, with or without their sympathy, as it may chance.

"And may all good be with you, my kind young friend, and a heart stout enough for this

adventure you are upon; that is the best 'good' of all.

"I remain, yours very sincerely,

"T. CARLYLE."

Carlyle had forgotten this letter, but said, "It is undoubtedly mine. It is what I have always believed . . . it has been so ever since I was at college. I do not mean to say I was not loved there as warmly by noble friends as ever man could be, but the world tumbled on me, and has ever since then been tumbling on me rubbish, huge wagon-loads of rubbish, thinking to smother me, and was surprised it did not smother me—turned round with amazement and said, 'What, you alive yet?' . . . While I was writing my *Frederick* my best friends, out of delicacy, did not call. Those who came were those I did not want to come, and I saw very few of them. I shook off everything to right and left. At last the work would have killed me, and I was obliged to take to riding, chiefly in the dark, about fourteen miles most days, plunging and floundering on. I ought to have been younger to have undertaken such a task. If they were to offer

me all Prussia, all the solar system, I would not write *Frederick* again. No bribe from God or man would tempt me to do it."

He was re-reading his *Frederick*, to correct it for the stereotyped edition. "On the whole I think it is very well done. No man perhaps in England could have done it better. If you write a book though now, you must just pitch it out of window and say, 'Ho! all you jackasses, come and trample on it and trample it into mud, or go on till you are tired.'" He laughed heartily at this explosion. His laughter struck me—humour controlling his wrath and in a sense *above* it, as if the final word were by no means hatred or contempt, even for the jackass. ". . . No piece of news of late years has gladdened me like the victory of the Prussians over the Austrians. It was the triumph of Prussian over French and Napoleonic influence. The Prussians were a valiant, pious people, and it was a question which should have the most power in Germany, they or Napoleon. The French are sunk in all kinds of filth. Compare what the Prussians did with what we did in the Crimea. The English people are an incredible people. They seem to think that it is not

necessary that a general should have the least knowledge of the art of war. It is as if you had the stone, and should cry out to any travelling tinker or blacksmith and say, 'Here, come here and cut me for the stone,' and he *would* cut you! Sir Charles Napier would have been a great general if he had had the opportunity. He was much delighted with Frederick. 'Frederick was a most extraordinary general,' said Sir Charles, and on examination I found out that all that Sir Charles had read of Frederick was a manual for Prussian officers, published by him about 1760, telling them what to do on particular occasions. I was very pleased at this admiration of Frederick by Sir Charles. . . .

"Sir John Bowring was one of your model men; men who go about imagining themselves the models of all virtues, and they are models of something very different. He was one of your patriots, and the Government to quiet him sent him out to China. When he got there he went to war with a third of the human race! He, the patriot, he who believed in the greatest-happiness principle, immediately went to war with a third of the human race!" (Great

laughter from T.C.) "And so far as I can make out he was all wrong.

"The *Frederick* is being translated into German. It is being done by a man whose name I have forgotten, but it was begun by one of the most faithful friends I ever had, Neuberg. I could not work in the rooms in the offices where lay the State papers I wanted to use, it brought on such a headache, but Neuberg went there, and for six months worked all day copying. He was taken ill, and a surgical operation was badly performed, and then in that wild, black weather at the beginning of last year, just after I came back from Mentone, the news came to me one night he was dead."

On leaving Carlyle shook hands with us both and said he was glad to have seen us. "It was pleasant to have friends coming out of the dark in this way."

Perhaps a reflection or two which occurred to me after this interview may not be out of place. Carlyle was perfectly frank, even to us of whom he knew but little. He did not stand off or refuse to talk on any but commonplace subjects. What was offered to us was

his best. And yet there is to be found in him a singular reserve, and those shallow persons who taunt him with inconsistency because he makes so much of silence, and yet talks so much, understand little or nothing of him. In half a dozen pages one man may be guilty of shameless garrulity, and another may be nobly reticent throughout a dozen volumes. Carlyle feels the contradictions of the universe as keenly as any man can feel them. He knows how easy it is to appear profound by putting anew the riddles which nobody can answer; he knows how strong is the temptation towards the insoluble. But upon these subjects he also knows how to hold his tongue; he does not shriek in the streets, but he bows his head. He has found no answer—he no more than the feeblest of us, and yet in his inmost soul there is a shrine, and he worships.

Carlyle is the champion of morals, ethics, law—call it what you like—of that which says we must not always do a thing because it is pleasant. There are two great ethical parties in the world, and, in the main, but two. One of them asserts the claims of the senses. Its doctrine is seductive because it is so right. It

is necessary that we should in a measure believe it, in order that life may be sweet. But nature has heavily weighted the scale in its favour; its acceptance requires no effort. It is easily perverted and becomes a snare. In our day nearly all genius has gone over to it, and preaching it is rather superfluous. The other party affirms what has been the soul of all religions worth having, that it is by repression and self-negation that men and States live.

It has been said that Carlyle is great because he is graphic, and he is supposed to be summed up in "mere picturesqueness," the silliest of verdicts. A man may be graphic in two ways. He may deal with his subject from the outside, and by dint of using strong language may "graphically" describe an execution or a drunken row in the streets. But he may be graphic by ability to penetrate into essence, and to express it in words which are worthy of it. What higher virtue than this can we imagine in poet, artist, or prophet?

Like all great men, Carlyle is infinitely tender. That was what struck me as I sat and looked in his eyes, and the best portraits in some degree confirm me. It is not worth

while here to produce passages from his books to prove my point, but I could easily do so, specially from the *Life of Sterling* and the *Cromwell.*[1] Much of his fierceness is an inverted tenderness.

His greatest book is perhaps the *Frederick*, the biography of a hero reduced more than once to such extremities that apparently nothing but some miraculous intervention could save him, and who did not yield, but struggled on and finally emerged victorious. When we consider Frederick's position during the last part of the Seven Years' War, we must admit that no man was ever in such desperate circumstances or showed such uncrushable determination. It was as if the Destinies, in order to teach us what human nature can do, had ordained that he who had the most fortitude should also encounter the severest trial of it.

[1] Since 1868 the *Reminiscences* and his *Life* have been published which put this estimate of him beyond all doubt. It is much to be regretted that a certain theory, a certain irresistible tendency to arrange facts so as to prove preconceived notions, a tendency more dangerous and unhistorical even than direct suppression of the truth or invention of what is not true, should have ruined Carlyle's biography. Professor Norton's edition of the *Reminiscences* should be compared with Mr. Froude's.

Over and over again Frederick would have been justified in acknowledging defeat, and we should have said that he had done all that could be expected even of such a temper as that with which he was endowed. If 'the struggle of the will with the encompassing world is the stuff of which epics are made, then no greater epic than that of *Frederick* has been written in prose or verse, and it has the important advantage of being true. It is interesting to note how attractive this primary virtue of which Frederick is such a remarkable representative is to Carlyle, how *moral* it is to him; and, indeed, is it not the sum and substance of all morality? It should be noted also that it was due to no religious motive: that it was bare, pure humanity. At times it is difficult not to believe that Carlyle, notwithstanding his piety, loves it all the more on that account. It is strange that an example so salutary and stimulating to the poorest and meanest of us should be set by an unbelieving king, and that my humdrum existence should be secretly supported by "Frederick II. Roi de Prusse."

* * * * *

Soon after Carlyle died I went to Ecclefechan and stood by his grave. It was not a day that I would have chosen for such an errand, for it was cold, grey, and hard, and towards the afternoon it rained a slow, persistent, wintry rain. The kirkyard in Ecclefechan was dismal and depressing, but my thoughts were not there. I remembered what Carlyle was to the young men of thirty or forty years ago, in the days of that new birth, which was so strange a characteristic of the time. His books were read with excitement, with tears of joy, on lonely hills, by the seashore and in London streets, and the readers were thankful that it was their privilege to live when he also was alive. All that excitement has vanished, but those who knew what it was are the better for it. Carlyle now is almost nothing, but his day will return, he will be put in his place as one of the greatest souls who have been born amongst us, and his message will be considered as perhaps the most important which has ever been sent to us. This is what I thought as I stood in Ecclefechan kirkyard, and as I lingered I almost doubted if Carlyle *could* be dead. Was it possible that such as he could altogether die? Some touch, some turn,

I could not tell what or how, seemed all that was necessary to enable me to see and to hear him. It was just as if I were perplexed and baffled by a veil which prevented recognition of him, although I was sure he was behind it.

EARLY MORNING IN JANUARY

A WARM, still morning, with a clear sky and stars. At first the hills were almost black, but, as the dawn ascended, they became dark green, of a peculiarly delicate tint which is never seen in the daytime. The quietude is profound, although a voice from an unseen fishing-boat can now and then be heard. How strange the landscape seems! It is not a variation of the old landscape; it is a new world. The half-moon rides high in the sky, and near her is Jupiter. A little way further to the left is Venus, and still further down is Mercury, rare apparition, just perceptible where the deep blue of the night is yielding to the green which foretells the sun. The east grows lighter; the birds begin to stir in the bushes, and the cry of a gull rises from the base of the cliff. The sea becomes

responsive, and in a moment is overspread with continually changing colour, partly that of the heavens above it and partly self-contributed. With what slow, majestic pomp is the day preceded, as though there had been no day before it and no other would follow it!

MARCH

IT is a bright day in March, with a gentle south-west wind. Sitting still in the copse and facing the sun it strikes warm. It has already mounted many degrees on its way to its summer height, and is regaining its power. The clouds are soft, rounded, and spring-like, and the white of the blackthorn is discernible here and there amidst the underwood. The brooks are running full from winter rains but are not overflowing. All over the wood which fills up the valley lies a thin, purplish mist, harmonising with the purple bloom on the stems and branches. The buds are ready to burst, there is a sense of movement, of waking after sleep; the tremendous upward rush of life is almost felt. But how silent the process is! There is no hurry for achievement, although so much has

to be done—such infinite intricacy to be unfolded and made perfect. The little stream winding down the bottom turns and doubles on itself; a dead leaf falls into it, is arrested by a twig, and lies there content.

JUNE

IT is a quiet, warm day in June. The wind is westerly, but there is only just enough of it to waft now and then a sound from the far-off town, or the dull, subdued thunder of cannon-firing from ships or forts distant some forty miles or more. Massive, white-bordered clouds, grey underneath, sail overhead; there was heavy rain last night, and they are lifting and breaking a little. Softly and slowly they go, and one of them, darker than the rest, has descended in a mist of rain, blotting out the ships. The surface of the water is paved curiously in green and violet, and where the light lies on it scintillates like millions of stars. The grass is not yet cut, and the showers have brought it up knee-deep. Its gentle whisper is plainly heard, the most delicate of all the voices

in the world, and the meadow bends into billows, grey, silvery, and green, when a breeze of sufficient strength sweeps across it. The larks are so multitudinous that no distinct song can be caught, and amidst the confused melody comes the note of the thrush and the blackbird. A constant under-running accompaniment is just audible in the hum of innumerable insects and the sharp buzz of flies darting past the ear.

Only those who live in the open air and watch the fields and sea from hour to hour and day to day know what they are and what they mean. The chance visitor, or he who looks now and then, never understands them. While I have lain here, the clouds have risen, have become more aërial, and more suffused with light; the horizon has become better defined, and the yellow shingle beach is visible to its extremest point clasping the bay in its arms. The bay itself is the tenderest blue-green, and on the rolling plain which borders it lies intense sunlight chequered with moving shadows which wander eastwards. The wind has shifted a trifle, and comes straight up the Channel from the illimitable ocean.

AUGUST

A FEW days ago it was very hot. Afterwards we had a thunderstorm, followed by rain from the south-west. The wind has veered a point northerly, and the barometer is rising. This morning at half-past five the valley below was filled with white mist. Above it the tops of the trees on the highest points emerged sharply distinct. It was motionless, but gradually melted before the ascending sun, recalling Plutarch's "scenes in the beautiful temple of the world which the gods order at their own festivals, when we are initiated into their own mysteries." Here was a divine mystery, with initiation for those who cared for it. No priests were waiting, no ritual was necessary, the service was simple—solitary adoration and perfect silence.

As the day advances, masses of huge, heavy

clouds appear. They are well defined at the edges, and their intricate folds and depths are brilliantly illuminated. The infinitude of the sky is not so impressive when it is quite clear as when it contains and supports great clouds, and large blue spaces are seen between them. On the hillsides the fields here and there are yellow and the corn is in sheaves. The birds are mostly dumb, the glory of the furze and broom has passed, but the heather is in flower. The trees are dark, and even sombre, and, where they are in masses, look as if they were in solemn consultation. A fore-feeling of the end of summer steals upon me. Why cannot I banish this anticipation? Why cannot I rest and take delight in what is before me? If some beneficent god would but teach me how to take no thought for the morrow, I would sacrifice to him all I possess.

THE END OF OCTOBER

IT is the first south-westerly gale of the autumn. Its violence is increasing every minute, although the rain has ceased for awhile. For weeks sky and sea have been beautiful, but they have been tame. Now for some unknown reason there is a complete change, and all the strength of nature is awake. It is refreshing to be once more brought face to face with her tremendous power, and to be reminded of the mystery of its going and coming. It is soothing to feel so directly that man, notwithstanding his science and pretentions, his subjugation of steam and electricity, is as nothing compared with his Creator. The air has a freshness and odour about it to which we have long been strangers. It has been dry, and loaded with fine dust, but now it is deliciously wet and

clean. The wind during the summer has changed lightly through all the points of the compass, but it has never brought any scent save that of the land, nothing from a distance. Now it is charged with messages from the ocean.

The sky is not uniformly overcast, but is covered with long horizontal folds of cloud, very dark below and a little lighter where they turn up one into the other. They are incessantly modified by the storm, and fragments are torn away from them which sweep overhead. The sea, looked at from the height, shows white edges almost to the horizon, and although the waves at a distance cannot be distinguished, the tossing of a solitary vessel labouring to get round the point for shelter shows how vast they are The prevailing colour of the water is greyish-green, passing into deep-blue, and perpetually shifting in tint. A quarter of a mile away the breakers begin, and spread themselves in a white sheet to the land.

A couple of gulls rise from the base of the cliffs to a height of about a hundred feet above them. They turn their heads to the south-west, and hover like hawks, but without any visible movement of their wings. They are followed

by two more, who also poise themselves in the same way. Presently all four mount higher, and again face the tempest. They do not appear to defy it, nor even to exert themselves in resisting it. What to us below is fierce opposition is to them a support and delight. How these wonderful birds are able to accomplish this feat no mathematician can tell us. After remaining stationary a few minutes, they wheel round, once more ascend, and then without any effort go off to sea directly in the teeth of the hurricane.

NOVEMBER

A NOVEMBER day at the end of the month—the country is left to those who live in it. The scattered visitors who took lodgings in the summer in the villages have all departed, and the recollection that they have been here makes the solitude more complete. The woods in which they wandered are impassable, for the rain has been heavy, and the dry, baked clay of August has been turned into a slough a foot deep. The wind, what there is of it, is from the south-west, soft, sweet and damp; the sky is almost covered with bluish-grey clouds, which here and there give way and permit a dim, watery gleam to float slowly over the distant pastures. The grass for the most part is greyish-green, more grey than green where it has not been mown, but on the rocky

and broken ground there is a colour like that of an emerald, and the low sun when it comes out throws from the projections on the hillside long and beautifully shaped shadows. Multitudes of gnats in these brief moments of sunshine are seen playing in it. The leaves have not all fallen, down in the hollow hardly any have gone, and the trees are still bossy, tinted with the delicate yellowish-brown and brown of different stages of decay. The hedges have been washed clean of the white dust; the roads have been washed; a deep drain has just begun to trickle and on the meadows lie little pools of the clearest rainwater, reflecting with added loveliness any blue patch of the heavens disclosed above them. The birds are silent save the jackdaws and the robin, who still sings his recollections of the summer, or his anticipations of the spring, or perhaps his pleasure in the late autumn. The finches are in flocks, and whirl round in the air with graceful, shell-like convolutions as they descend, part separating, for no reason apparently, and forming a second flock which goes away over the copse. There is hardly any farm-work going on, excepting in the ditches, which are being cleaned in readi-

ness for the overflow when the thirsty ground shall have sucked its fill. Under a bank by the roadside a couple of men employed in carting stone for road-mending are sitting on a sack eating their dinner. The roof of the barn beyond them is brilliant with moss and lichens; it has not been so vivid since last February. It is a delightful time. No demand is made for ecstatic admiration; everything is at rest, nature has nothing to do but to sleep and wait.

THE BREAK-UP OF A GREAT DROUGHT

FOR three months there had been hardly a drop of rain. The wind had been almost continuously north-west, and from that to east. Occasionally there were light airs from the south-west, and vapour rose, but there was nothing in it; there was no true south-westerly breeze, and in a few hours the weather-cock returned to the old quarter. Not infrequently the clouds began to gather, and there was every sign that a change was at hand. The barometer at these times fell gradually day after day until at last it reached a point which generally brought drenching storms, but none appeared, and then it began slowly to rise again and we knew that our hopes were vain, and that a week at least

must elapse before it would regain its usual height and there might be a chance of declining. At last the disappointment was so keen that the instrument was removed. It was better not to watch it, but to hope for a surprise. The grass became brown, and in many places was killed down to the roots; there was no hay; myriads of swarming caterpillars devoured the fruit trees; the brooks were all dry; water for cattle had to be fetched from ponds and springs miles away; the roads were broken up; the air was loaded with grit; and the beautiful green of the hedges was choked with dust. Birds like the rook, which fed upon worms, were nearly starved, and were driven far and wide for strange food. It was pitiable to see them trying to pick the soil of the meadow as hard as a rock. The everlasting glare was worse than the gloom of winter, and the sense of universal parching thirst became so distressing that the house was preferred to the fields. We were close to a water famine! The Atlantic, the source of all life, was asleep, and what if it should never wake! We know not its ways, it mocks all our science. Close to us lies this great mystery, incomprehensible, and

yet our very breath depends upon it. Why should not the sweet tides of soft moist air cease to stream in upon us? No reason could be given why every green herb and living thing should not perish; no reason, save a faith which was blind. For aught we *knew*, the ocean-begotten aërial current might forsake the land and it might become a desert.

One night grey bars appeared in the western sky, but they had too often deluded us, and we did not believe in them. On this particular evening they were a little heavier, and the window-cords were damp. The air which came across the cliff was cool, and if we had dared to hope we should have said it had a scent of the sea in it. At four o'clock in the morning there was a noise of something beating against the panes—they were streaming! It was impossible to lie still, and I rose and went out of doors. No creature was stirring, there was no sound save that of the rain, but a busier time there had not been for many a long month. Thousands of millions of blades of grass and corn were eagerly drinking. For sixteen hours the downpour continued, and when it was dusk I again went out. The watercourses by the side of the

roads had a little water in them, but not a drop had reached those at the edge of the fields, so thirsty was the earth. The drought, thank God, was at an end!

SPINOZA

NOW that twenty years have passed since I began the study of Spinoza it is good to find that he still holds his ground. Much in him remains obscure, but there is enough which is sufficiently clear to give a direction to thought and to modify action. To the professional metaphysician Spinoza's work is already surpassed, and is absorbed in subsequent systems. We are told to read him once because he is historically interesting, and then we are supposed to have done with him. But if "Spinozism," as it is called, is but a stage of development there is something in Spinoza which can be superseded as little as the *Imitation of Christ* or the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and it is this which continues to draw men to him. Goethe never cared for set philosophical sys-

tems. Very early in life he thought he had found out that they were useless pieces of construction, but to the end of his days he clung to Spinoza, and Philina, of all persons in the world, repeats one of the finest sayings in the *Ethic*. So far as the metaphysicians are carpenters, and there is much carpentering in most of them, Goethe was right, and the larger part of their industry endures wind and weather but for a short time. Spinoza's object was not to make a scheme of the universe. He felt that the things on which men usually set their hearts give no permanent satisfaction, and he cast about for some means by which to secure "a joy continuous and supreme to all eternity." I propose now, without attempting to connect or contrast Spinoza with Descartes or the Germans, to name some of those thoughts in his books by which he conceived he had attained his end.

The sorrow of life is the rigidity of the material universe in which we are placed. We are bound by physical laws, and there is a constant pressure of matter-of-fact evidence to prove that we are nothing but common and cheap products of the earth to which in a few

moments or years we return. Spinoza's chief aim is to free us from this sorrow, and to free us from it by *thinking*. The emphasis on this word is important. He continually insists that a thing is not unreal because we cannot imagine it. His own science, mathematics, affords him examples of what *must* be, although we cannot picture it, and he believes that true consolation lies in the region of that which cannot be imaged but can be thought.

Setting out on his quest, he lays hold at the very beginning on the idea of Substance, which he afterwards identifies with the idea of God. "By Substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; in other words, that, the conception of which does not need the conception of another thing from which it must be formed."[1] "By God, I understand Being absolutely infinite, that is to say, substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence."[2] "God, or substance consisting of infinite attributes, each one of which expresses eternal and infinite essence, necessarily exists."[3]

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 1, def. 3. [2] Ibid., pt. 1, def. 6.
[3] Ibid., pt. 1, prop. 11.

By the phrases "in itself" and "by itself," we are to understand that this conception cannot be explained in other terms. Substance must be posited, and there we must leave it. The demonstration of the last-quoted proposition, the 11th, is elusive, and I must pass it by, merely observing that the objection that no idea involves existence, and that consequently the idea of God does not involve it, is not a refutation of Spinoza, who might rejoin that it is impossible not to affirm existence of God as the *Ethic* defines him. Spinoza escapes one great theological difficulty. Directly we begin to reflect we are dissatisfied with a material God, and the nobler religions assert that God is a Spirit. But if He be a pure spirit whence comes the material universe? To Spinoza pure spirit and pure matter are mere artifices of the logical understanding. His God is the Substance with infinite attributes of which thought and extension are the two revealed to man, and he goes further, for he maintains that they are one and the same thing viewed in different ways, inside and outside of the same reality. The conception of God, strictly speaking, is

not incomprehensible, but it is not *circum*-prehensible; if it were it could not be the true conception of Him.

Spinoza declares that "the human mind possesses an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God"[1]—not of God in His completeness, but it is adequate. The demonstration of this proposition is at first sight unsatisfactory, because we look for one which shall enable us to form an image of God like that which we can form of a triangle. But we cannot have "a knowledge of God as distinct as that which we have of common notions, because we cannot imagine God as we can bodies." "To your question," says Spinoza to Boxel, "whether I have as clear an idea of God as I have of a triangle? I answer, Yes. But if you ask me whether I have as clear an image of God as I have of a triangle I shall say, No; for we cannot imagine God, but we can in a measure understand Him. Here also, it is to be observed that I do not say that I altogether know God, but that I understand some of His attributes—not all, nor the greatest part, and it is clear that my ignorance of very many does

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 2, prop. 47.

not prevent my knowledge of certain others. When I learned the elements of Euclid, I very soon understood that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, and I clearly perceived this property of a triangle, although I was ignorant of many others." [1]

"Individual things are nothing but affections or modes of God's attributes, expressing those attributes in a certain and determinate manner," [2] and hence "the more we understand individual objects, the more we understand God." [3]

The intellect of God in no way resembles the human intellect, for we cannot conceive Him as proposing an end and considering the means to attain it. "The intellect of God, in so far as it is conceived to constitute His essence, is in truth the cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence—a truth which seems to have been understood by those who have maintained that God's intellect, will, and power are one and the same thing." [4]

[1] Letter 56 (Van Vloten and Land's ed.).
[2] *Ethic*, pt. 1, coroll. prop. 25.
[3] Ibid., pt. 5, prop. 24.
[4] Ibid., pt. 1, schol. to prop. 17.

The whole of God is *fact*, and Spinoza denies any reserve in Him of something unexpressed. "The omnipotence of God has been actual from eternity, and in the same actuality will remain to eternity," [1] not of course in the sense that everything which exists has always existed as we now know it, or that nothing will exist hereafter which does not exist now, but that in God everything that has been, and will be, eternally *is*.

The reader will perhaps ask, What has this theology to do with the "joy continuous and supreme"? We shall presently meet with some deductions which contribute to it, but it is not difficult to understand that Spinoza, to use his own word, might call the truths set forth in these propositions "blessed." Let a man once believe in that God of infinite attributes of which thought and extension are those by which He manifests Himself to us; let him see that the opposition between thought and matter is fictitious; that his mind "is a part of the infinite intellect of God"; that he is not a mere transient, outside interpreter of the universe, but himself the soul or law, which is the

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 1, schol. to prop. 17.

universe, and he will feel a relationship with infinity which will emancipate him.

It is not true that in Spinoza's God there is so little that is positive that it is not worth preserving. All Nature is in Him, and if the objector is sincere he will confess that it is not the lack of contents in the idea which is disappointing, but a lack of contents particularly interesting to himself.

The opposition between the mind and body of man as two diverse entities ceases with that between thought and extension. It would be impossible briefly to explain in all its fulness what Spinoza means by the proposition: "The object of the idea constituting the human mind is a body"[1]; it is sufficient here to say that, just as extension and thought are one, considered in different aspects, so body and mind are one. We shall find in the fifth part of the *Ethic* that Spinoza affirms the eternity of the mind, though not perhaps in the way in which it is usually believed.

Following the order of the *Ethic* we now come to its more directly ethical maxims. Spinoza denies the freedom commonly assigned

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 2, prop. 13.

to the will, or perhaps it is more correct to say he denies that it is intelligible. The will is determined by the intellect. The idea of the triangle involves the affirmation or volition that its three angles are equal to two right angles. If we understand what a triangle is we are not "free" to believe that it contains more or less than two right angles, nor to act as if it contained more or less than two. The only real freedom of the mind is obedience to the reason, and the mind is enslaved when it is under the dominion of the passions. "God does not act from freedom of the will," [1] and consequently "things could have been produced by God in no other manner and in no other order than that in which they have been produced." [2]

If you will but reflect," Spinoza tells Boxel, "that indifference is nothing but ignorance or doubt, and that a will always constant and in all things determinate is a virtue and a necessary property of the intellect, you will see that my words are entirely in accord with the truth." [3] To the same effect is a passage in a letter to Blyenbergh, "Our liberty

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 1, coroll. 1, prop. 32.
[2] Ibid., pt. 1, prop. 33.
[3] Letter 56.

does not consist in a certain contingency nor in a certain indifference, but in the manner of affirming or denying, so that in proportion as we affirm or deny anything with less indifference, are we the more free."[1] So also to Schuller, "I call that thing free which exists and acts solely from the necessity of its own nature: I call that thing coerced which is determined to exist and to act in a certain and determinate manner by another."[2] With regard to this definition it might be objected that the necessity does not lie solely in the person who wills but is also in the object. The triangle as well as the nature of man contains the necessity. What Spinoza means is that the free man by the necessity of his nature is bound to assert the truth of what follows from the definition of a triangle and that the stronger he feels the necessity the more free he is. Hence it follows that the wider the range of the intellect and the more imperative the necessity which binds it, the larger is its freedom.

In genuine freedom Spinoza rejoices. "The doctrine is of service in so far as it teaches us that we do everything by the will of God alone,

[1] Letter 21. [2] Letter 58.

and that we are partakers of the divine nature in proportion as our actions become more and more perfect and we more and more understand God. This doctrine, therefore, besides giving repose in every way to the soul, has also this advantage, that it teaches us in what our highest happiness or blessedness consists, namely, in the knowledge of God alone, by which we are drawn to do those things only which love and piety persuade." [1] In other words, being part of the whole, the grandeur and office of the whole are ours. We are anxious about what we call "personality," but in truth there is nothing in it of any worth, and the less we care for it the more "blessed" we are.

"By the desire which springs from reason we follow good directly and avoid evil indirectly" [2]: our aim should be the good; in obtaining that we are delivered from evil. To the same purpose is the conclusion of the fifth book of the *Ethic* that "No one delights in blessedness because he has restrained his affects, but, on the contrary, the power of restraining his lusts springs from blessedness

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 2, schol. prop. 49.
[2] Ibid., pt. 4, coroll. prop. 63.

itself."[1] This is exactly what the Gospel says to the Law.

Fear is not the motive of a free man to do what is good. "A free man thinks of nothing less than of death, and his wisdom is not a meditation upon death, but upon life."[2] This is the celebrated sixty-seventh proposition of the fourth part. If we examine the proof which directly depends on the sixty-third proposition of the same part—"he who is led by fear, and does what is good in order that he may avoid what is evil, is not led by reason"—we shall see that Spinoza is referring to the fear of the "evil" of hell-fire.

All Spinoza's teaching with regard to the passions is a consequence of what he believes of God and man. He will study the passions and not curse them. He finds that by understanding them "we can bring it to pass that we suffer less from them. We have, therefore, mainly to strive to acquire a clear and distinct knowledge of each affect."[3] "If the human mind had none but adequate ideas it would

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 5, prop. 42.

[2] "Agis being asked on a time how a man might continue free all his life; he answered, 'By despising death.'" (Plutarch's "Morals." Laconic Apophthegms.)

[3] *Ethic*, pt. 5, schol. prop. 4.

form no notion of evil."[1] "The difference between a man who is led by affect or opinion alone and one who is led by reason" is that "the former, whether he wills it or not, does those things of which he is entirely ignorant, but the latter does the will of no one but himself."[2] *They know not what they do.*

The direct influence of Spinoza's theology is also shown in his treatment of pity, hatred, laughter, and contempt. "The man who has properly understood that everything follows from the necessity of the divine nature, and comes to pass according to the eternal laws and rules of nature, will in truth discover nothing which is worthy of hatred, laughter, or contempt, nor will he pity any one, but, so far as human virtue is able, he will endeavour to *do well*, as we say, and to *rejoice*."[3] By pity is to be understood mere blind sympathy. The good that we do by this pity with the eyes of the mind shut ought to be done with them open. "He who lives according to the guidance of reason strives as much as possible

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 4, coroll. prop. 64.
[2] Ibid., pt. 4, schol. prop. 66.
[3] Ibid., pt. 4, schol. prop. 50.

to repay the hatred, anger, or contempt of others towards himself with love or generosity. . . . He who wishes to avenge injuries by hating in return does indeed live miserably. But he who, on the contrary, strives to drive out hatred by love, fights joyfully and confidently, with equal ease resisting one man or a number of men, and needing scarcely any assistance from fortune. Those whom he conquers yield gladly, not from defect of strength, but from an increase of it." [1]

"Joy is the passion by which the mind passes to a greater perfection: sorrow, on the other hand, is the passion by which it passes to a less perfection." [2] "No God and no human being, except an envious one, is delighted by my impotence or my trouble, or esteems as any virtue in us tears, sighs, fears, and other things of this kind, which are signs of mental impotence; on the contrary, the greater the joy with which we are affected, the greater the perfection to which we pass thereby; that is to say, the more do we necessarily

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 4, prop. 46 and schol.
[2] Ibid., pt. 3, schol. prop. 11.

partake of the divine nature."[1] It would be difficult to find an account of joy and sorrow which is closer to the facts than that which Spinoza gives. He lived amongst people Roman Catholic and Protestant who worshipped sorrow. Sorrow was the divinely decreed law of life and joy was merely a permitted exception. He reversed this order and his claim to be considered in this respect as one of the great revolutionary religious and moral reformers has not been sufficiently recognised. It is remarkable that, unlike other reformers, he has not contradicted error by an exaggeration, which itself very soon stands in need of contradiction, but by simple sanity which requires no correction. One reason for this peculiarity is that the *Ethic* was the result of long meditation. It was published posthumously and was discussed in draft for many years before his death. Usually what we call our convictions are propositions which we have not thoroughly examined in quietude, but notions which have just come into our heads and are irreversible to us solely because we are committed to them. Much may be urged against the *Ethic* and on

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 4, schol. prop. 45.

behalt of hatred, contempt, and sorrow. The "other side" may be produced mechanically to almost every truth; the more easily, the more divine that truth is, and against no truths is it producible with less genuine mental effort than against those uttered by the founder of Christianity. The question, however, if we are dealing with the New Testament, is not whether the Sermon on the Mount can be turned inside out in a debating society, but whether it does not represent better than anything which the clever leader of the opposition can formulate the principle or temper which should govern our conduct.

There is a group of propositions in the last part of the *Ethic*, which, although they are difficult, it may be well to notice, because they were evidently regarded by Spinoza as helping him to the end he had in view. The difficulty lies in a peculiar combination of religious ideas and scientific form. These propositions are the following:—[1]

"The mind can cause all the affections of the body or the images of things to be related to the idea of God."

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 5, props. 14–20.

"He who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his affects loves God, and loves Him better the better he understands himself and his affects."

"This love to God above everything else ought to occupy the mind."

"God is free from passions, nor is He affected with any affect of joy or sorrow."

"No one can hate God."

"He who loves God cannot strive that God should love him in return."

"This love to God cannot be defiled either by the effect of envy or jealousy, but is the more strengthened the more people we imagine to be connected with God by the same bond of love."

The proof of the first of these propositions, using language somewhat different from that of the text, is as follows:—There is no affection of the body of which the mind cannot form some clear and distinct conception, that is to say, of everything perceived it is capable of forming a clear and adequate idea, not exhaustive, as Spinoza is careful to warn us, but an idea not distorted by our personality, and one which is in accordance with the thing itself, adequate as

far as it goes. Newton's perception that the moon perpetually falls to the earth by the same numerical law under which a stone falls to it was an adequate perception. "Therefore," continues the demonstration (quoting the fifteenth proposition of the first part—"Whatever is, is in God, and nothing can either be or be conceived without God"), "the mind can cause all the affections of the body to be related to the idea of God." Spinoza, having arrived at his adequate idea thus takes a further step to the idea of God. What is perceived is not an isolated external phenomenon. It is a reality in God: it *is* God: there is nothing more to be thought or said of God than the affirmation of such realities as these. The "relation to the idea of God" means that in the affirmation He is affirmed. "Nothing," that is to say, no reality "can be conceived without God."

But it is possible for the word "love" to be applied to the relationship between man and God. He who has a clear and adequate perception passes to greater perfection, and therefore rejoices. Joy, accompanied with the idea of a cause, is love. By the fourteenth

proposition this joy is accompanied by the idea of God as its cause, and therefore love to God follows. The demonstration seems formal, and we ask ourselves, What is the actual emotion which Spinoza describes? It is not new to him, for in the *Short Treatise*, which is an early sketch for the *Ethic*, he thus writes:— "Hence it follows incontrovertibly that it is knowledge which is the cause of love, so that when we learn to know God in this way, we must necessarily unite ourselves to Him, for He cannot be known, nor can he reveal Him self, save as that which is supremely great and good. In this union alone, as we have already said, our happiness consists. I do not say that we must know Him adequately; but it is sufficient for us, in order to be united with Him, to know Him in a measure, for the knowledge we have of the body is not of such a kind that we can know it as it is or perfectly; and yet what a union! what love!" [1]

Perhaps it may clear the ground a little if we observe that Spinoza often avoids a negative by a positive statement. Here he may intend to show us what the love of God is not, that it is

[1] *Short Treatise*, pt. 2, chap. 22.

not what it is described in the popular religion to be. "The only love of God I know," we may imagine him saying, "thus arises. The adequate perception is the keenest of human joys for thereby I see God Himself. That which I see is not a thing or a person, but nevertheless what I feel towards it can be called by no other name than love. Although the object of this love is not thing or person it is not indefinite, it is this only which is definite; 'thing' and 'person' are abstract and unreal. There was a love to God in Kepler's heart when the three laws were revealed to him. If it was not love to God, what is love to Him?"

To the eighteenth proposition, "No one can hate God," there is a scholium which shows that the problem of pain which Spinoza has left unsolved must have occurred to him. "But some may object that if we understand God to be the cause of all things, we do for that very reason consider Him to be the cause of sorrow. But I reply that in so far as we understand the causes of sorrow, it ceases to be a passion (Prop. 3, pt. 5), that is to say (Prop. 59, pt. 3) it ceases to be a sorrow; and therefore in so far as we understand God to be

the cause of sorrow do we rejoice." The third proposition of the fifth part which he quotes merely proves that in so far as we understand passion it ceases to be a passion. He replies to those "who ask why God has not created all men in such a manner that they might be controlled by the dictates of reason alone," [1] "Because to Him material was not wanting for the creation of everything, from the highest down to the very lowest grade of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of His nature were so ample that they sufficed for the production of everything which can be conceived by an infinite intellect." Nevertheless of pain we have no explanation. Pain is not lessened by understanding it, nor is its mystery penetrated if we see that to God material could not have been wanting for the creation of men or animals who have to endure it all their lives. But if Spinoza is silent in the presence of pain, so also is every religion and philosophy which the world has seen. Silence is the only conclusion of the Book of Job, and patient fortitude in the hope of future enlightenment is the conclusion of Christianity.

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 1, Appendix.

It is a weak mistake, however, to put aside what religions and philosophies tell us because it is insufficient. To Job it is not revealed why suffering is apportioned so unequally or why it exists, but the answer of the Almighty from the whirlwind he cannot dispute, and although Spinoza has nothing more to say about pain than he says in the passages just quoted and was certainly not exempt from it himself, it may be impossible that any man should hate God.

We now come to the final propositions of the *Ethic*, those in which Spinoza declares his belief in the eternity of mind. The twenty-second and twenty-third propositions of the fifth part are as follows:—

"In God, nevertheless, there necessarily exists an idea which expresses the essence of this or that human body under the form of eternity."

"The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal."

The word "nevertheless" is a reference to the preceding proposition which denies the continuity of memory or imagination excepting

so long as the body lasts. The demonstration of the twenty-third proposition is not easy to grasp, but the substance of it is that although the mind is the idea of the body, that is to say, the mind is body as thought and body is thought as extension, the mind, or essence of the body, is not completely destroyed with the body. It exists as an eternal idea, and by an eternal necessity in God. Here again we must not think of that personality which is nothing better than a material notion, an image from the concrete applied to mind, but we must cling fast to thought, to the thoughts which alone makes us what we *are*, and these, says Spinoza, are in God and are not to be defined by time. They have always been and always will be. The enunciation of the thirty-third proposition is, "The intellectual love of God which arises from the third kind of knowledge is eternal." The "third kind of knowledge" is that intuitive science which "advances from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things;[1] "No love

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 2, schol. 2, prop. 40.

except intellectual love is eternal,"[1] and the scholium to this proposition adds, "If we look at the common opinion of men, we shall see that they are indeed conscious of the eternity of their minds, but they confound it with duration, and attribute it to imagination or memory, which they believe remain after death." The intellectual love of the mind towards God is the very "love with which He loves Himself, not in so far as He is infinite, but in so far as He can be manifested through the essence of the human mind, considered under the form of eternity; that is to say, the intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love with which God loves Himself."[2] "Hence it follows that God, in so far as He loves Himself, loves men, and consequently that the love of God towards men and the intellectual love of the mind towards God are one and the same thing."[3] The more adequate ideas the mind forms "the less it suffers from those affects which are evil, and the less it fears death" because "the greater

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 5, coroll. prop. 34.
[2] Ibid., pt. 5, prop. 36.
[3] Ibid., pt. 5, prop. 36, coroll.

is that part which remains unharmed, and the less consequently does it suffer from the affects." It is possible even "for the human mind to be of such a nature that that part of it which we have shown perishes with its body, in comparison with the part of it which remains, is of no consequence."[1]

Spinoza, it is clear, holds that in some way—in what way he will not venture to determine—the more our souls are possessed by the intellectual love of God, the less is death to be dreaded, for the smaller is that part of us which can die. Three parallel passages may be appended. One will show that this was Spinoza's belief from early years and the other two that it is not peculiar to him. "If the soul is united with some other thing which is and remains unchangeable, it must also remain unchangeable and permanent."[2] "Further, this creative reason does not at one time think, at another time not think [it thinks eternally]: and when separated from the body it remains nothing but what it essentially is: and thus it is alone

[1] *Ethic*, pt. 5, prop. 38.
[2] *Short Treatise*, pt. 2, chap. 23.

immortal and eternal. Of this unceasing work of thought, however, we retain no memory, because this reason is unaffected by its objects; whereas the receptive, passive intellect (which is affected) is perishable, and can really think nothing without the support of the creative intellect."[1] The third quotation is from a great philosophic writer, but one to whom perhaps we should not turn for such a coincidence. "I believe," said Pantagruel, "that all intellectual souls are exempt from the scissors of Atropos. They are all immortal."[2]

I have not tried to write an essay on Spinoza, for in writing an essay there is a temptation to a consistency and completeness which are contributed by the writer and are not to be found in his subject. The warning must be reiterated that here as elsewhere we are too desirous, both writers and readers, of clear definition where none is possible. We do not stop where the object of our contemplation stops for our eyes. For my own part I must say that there is much in Spinoza which is beyond me, much which I cannot *extend*, and much which, if it can be

[1] Aristotle's *Psychology* (Wallace's translation), p. 161.
[2] Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, book 4, chap. 27.

extended, seems to involve contradiction. But I have also found his works productive beyond those of almost any man I know of that *acquiescentia mentis* which enables us to live.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE ON THE DEVIL

SPINOZA denies the existence of the Devil, and says, in the *Short Treatise*, that if he is the mere opposite of God and has nothing from God, he is simply the Nothing. But if a philosophical doctrine be true, it does not follow that as it stands it is applicable to practical problems. For these a rule may have to be provided, which, although it may not be inconsistent with the scientific theorem, differs from it in form. The Devil is not an invention of priests for priestly purposes, nor is he merely a hypothesis to account for facts, but he has been forced upon us in order that we may be able to deal with them. Unless we act as though there were an enemy to

be resisted and chained, if we fritter away differences of kind into differences of degree, we shall make poor work of life. Spinoza himself assumes that other commands than God's may be given to us, but that we are unhesitatingly to obey His and His only. "Ad fidem ergo catholicam," he says, "ea solummodo pertinent, quæ erga Deum *obedientia* absolute ponit." Consciousness seems to testify to the presence of two mortal foes within us—one Divine and the other diabolic—and perhaps the strongest evidence is not the rebellion of the passions, but the picturing and the mental processes which are almost entirely beyond our control, and often greatly distress us. We look down upon them; they are not ours, and yet they are ours, and we cry out with St. Paul against the law warring with the law of our minds. Bunyan of course knows the practical problem and the rule, and to him the Devil is not merely the tempter to crimes, but the great Adversary. In the *Holy War* the chosen regiments of Diabolus are the Doubters, and notwithstanding their theologic names, they carried deadlier weapons than the theologic doubters of to-day. The captain over the Grace-doubters

was Captain Damnation; he over the Felicity-doubters was Captain Past-hope, and his ancient-bearer was Mr. Despair. The nature of the Doubters is "to put a question upon every one of the truths of Emanuel, and their country is called the Land of Doubting, and that land lieth off and furthest remote to the north between the land of Darkness and that called the Valley of the Shadow of Death." They are not children of the sun, and although they are not sinners in the common sense of the word, those that were caught in Mansoul were promptly executed.

There is nothing to be done but to fight and wait for the superior help which will come if we do what we can. Emanuel at first delayed his aid in the great battle, and the first brunt was left to Captain Credence. Presently, however, Emanuel appeared "with colours flying, trumpets sounding, and the feet of his men scarce touched the ground; they hasted with such celerity towards the captains that were engaged that . . . there was not left so much as one Doubter alive, they lay spread upon the ground dead men as one would spread dung on the land." The dead were buried

"lest the fumes and ill-favours that would arise from them might infect the air and so annoy the famous town of Mansoul." But it will be a fight to the end for Diabolus, and the lords of the pit escaped.

After Emanuel had finally occupied Mansoul he gave the citizens some advice. The policy of Diabolus was "to make of their castle a warehouse." Emanuel made it a fortress and a palace, and garrisoned the town. "O my Mansoul," he said, "nourish my captains; make not my captains sick, O Mansoul."

INJUSTICE

A NOTION, self-begotten in me, of the limitations of my friend is answerable for the barrenness of my intercourse with him. I set him down as hard; I speak to him as if he were hard and from that which is hard in myself. Naturally I evoke only that which is hard, although there may be fountains of tenderness in him of which I am altogether unaware. It is far better in conversation not to regulate it according to supposed capacities or tempers, which are generally those of some fictitious being, but to be simply ourselves. We shall often find unexpected and welcome response.

Our estimates of persons, unless they are frequently revived by personal intercourse, are apt to alter insensibly and to become untrue.

They acquire increased definiteness but they lose in comprehensiveness.

Especially is this true of those who are dead. If I do not read a great author for some time my mental abstract of him becomes summary and false. I turn to him again, all summary judgments upon him become impossible, and he partakes of infinitude. Writers, and people who are in society and talk much are apt to be satisfied with an algebraic symbol for a man of note, and their work is done not with him but with x.

TIME SETTLES CONTROVERSIES

WE ought to let Time have his own way in the settlement of our disputes. It is a commonplace how much he is able to do with some of our troubles, such as loss of friends or wealth; but we do not sufficiently estimate his power to help our arguments. If I permit myself to dispute, I always go beyond what is necessary for my purpose, and my continual iteration and insistence do nothing but provoke opposition. Much better would it be simply to state my case and leave it. To do more is not only to distrust it, but to distrust that in my friend which is my best ally, and will more surely assist me than all my vehemence. Sometimes—nay, often—it is better to say nothing, for there is a constant tendency

in Nature towards rectification, and her quiet protest and persuasiveness are hindered by personal interference. If anybody very dear to me were to fall into any heresy of belief or of conduct, I am not sure that I ought to rebuke him, and that he would not sooner be converted by observing my silent respect for him than by preaching to him.

TALKING ABOUT OUR TROUBLES

WE may talk about our troubles to those persons who can give us direct help, but even in this case we ought as much as possible to come to a provisional conclusion before consultation; to be perfectly clear to ourselves within our own limits. Some people have a foolish trick of applying for aid before they have done anything whatever to aid themselves, and in fact try to talk themselves into perspicuity. The only way in which they can think is by talking, and their speech consequently is not the expression of opinion already and carefully formed, but the manufacture of it.

We may also tell our troubles to those who are suffering if we can lessen their own. It may be a very great relief to them to know

that others have passed through trials equal to theirs and have survived. There are obscure, nervous diseases, hypochondriac fancies, almost uncontrollable impulses, which terrify by their apparent singularity. If we could believe that they are common, the worst of the fear would vanish.

But, as a rule, we should be very careful for our own sake not to speak much about what distresses us. Expression is apt to carry with it exaggeration, and this exaggerated form becomes henceforth that under which we represent our miseries to ourselves, so that they are thereby increased. By reserve, on the other hand, they are diminished, for we attach less importance to that which it was not worth while to mention. Secrecy, in fact, may be our salvation.

It is injurious to be always treated as if something were the matter with us. It is health-giving to be dealt with as if we were healthy, and the man who imagines his wits are failing becomes stronger and sounder by being entrusted with a difficult problem than by all the assurances of a doctor.

They are poor creatures who are always

craving for pity. If we are sick, let us prefer conversation upon any subject rather than upon ourselves. Let it turn on matters that lie outside the dark chamber, upon the last new discovery, or the last new idea. So shall we seem still to be linked to the living world. By perpetually asking for sympathy an end is put to real friendship. The friend is afraid to intrude anything which has no direct reference to the patient's condition lest it should be thought irrelevant. No love even can long endure without complaint, silent it may be, an invalid who is entirely self-centred; and what an agony it is to know that we are tended simply as a duty by those who are nearest to us, and that they will really be relieved when we have departed! From this torture we may be saved if we early apprentice ourselves to the art of self-suppression and sternly apply the gag to eloquence upon our own woes. Nobody who really cares for us will mind waiting on us even to the long-delayed last hour if we endure in fortitude.

There is no harm in confronting our disorders or misfortunes. On the contrary, the attempt is wholesome. Much of what we dread is really

due to indistinctness of outline. If we have the courage to say to ourselves, What *is* this thing, then? let the worst come to the worst, and what then? we shall frequently find that after all it is not so terrible. What we have to do is to subdue tremulous, nervous, insane fright. Fright is often prior to an object; that is to say, the fright comes first and something is invented or discovered to account for it. There are certain states of body and mind which are productive of objectless fright, and the most ridiculous thing in the world is able to provoke it to activity. It is perhaps not too much to say that any calamity the moment it is apprehended by the reason alone loses nearly all its power to disturb and unfix us. The conclusions which are so alarming are not those of the reason, but, to use Spinoza's words, of the "affects."

FAITH.

FAITH is nobly seen when a man, standing like Columbus upon the shore with a dark, stormy Atlantic before him, resolves to sail, and although week after week no land be visible, still believes and still sails on; but it is nobler when there is no America as the goal of our venture, but something which is unsubstantial, as, for example, self-control and self-purification. It is curious, by the way, that discipline of this kind should almost have disappeared. Possibly it is because religion is now a matter of belief in certain propositions; but, whatever the cause may be, we do not train ourselves day by day to become better as we train ourselves to learn languages or science. To return from this parenthesis, we say that when no applause nor even recognition is

expected, to proceed steadily and alone for its own sake in the work of saving the soul is truer heroism than that which leads a martyr cheerfully to the stake.

Faith is at its best when we have to wrestle with despair, not only of ourselves but of the Universe; when we strain our eyes and see nothing but blackness. In the *Gorgias* Socrates maintains, not only that it is always better to suffer injustice than to commit it, but that it is better to be punished for injustice than to escape, and better to die than to do wrong; and it is better not only because of the effect on others but for our own sake. We are naturally led to ask what support a righteous man unjustly condemned could find, supposing he were about to be executed, if he had no faith in personal immortality and knew that his martyrdom could not have the least effect for good. Imagine him, for example, shut up in a dungeon and about to be strangled in it, and that not a single inquiry will be made about him—where will he look for help? what hope will compose him? He may say that in a few hours he will be asleep, and that nothing will then be of any consequence to him, but that

thought surely will hardly content him. He may reflect that he at least prevents the evil which would be produced by his apostasy; and very frequently in life, when we abstain from doing wrong, we have to be satisfied with a negative result and with the simple absence (which nobody notices) of some direct mischief, although the abstention may cost more than positive well-doing. This too, however, is but cold consolation when the cord is brought and the grave is already dug.

It must be admitted that Reason cannot give any answer. Socrates, when his reasoning comes to an end, often permits himself to tell a story. "My dialectic," he seems to say, "is of no further use; but here is a tale for you," and as he goes on with it we can see his satyr eyes gleam with an intensity which shows that he did not consider he was inventing a mere fable. That was the way in which he taught theology. Perhaps we may find that something less than logic and more than a dream may be of use to us. We may figure to ourselves that this universe of souls is the manifold expression of the One, and that in this expression there is a purpose

which gives importance to all the means of which it avails itself. Apparent failure may therefore be a success, for the mind which has been developed into perfect virtue falls back into the One, having served (by its achievements) the end of its existence. The potential in the One has become actual, has become real, and the One is the richer thereby.

PATIENCE

WHAT is most to be envied in really religious people of the earlier type is their intellectual and moral peace. They had obtained certain convictions, a certain conception of the Universe, by which they could live. Their horizon may have been encompassed with darkness; experience sometimes contradicted their faith, but they trusted—nay, they knew—that the opposition was not real and that the truths were not to be shaken. Their conduct was marked by a corresponding unity. They determined once for all that there were rules which had to be obeyed, and when any particular case arose it was not judged according to the caprice of the moment, but by statute.

We, on the other hand, can only doubt. So

far as those subjects are concerned on which we are most anxious to be informed, we are sure of nothing. What we have to do is to accept the facts and wait. We must take care not to deny beauty and love because we are forced also to admit ugliness and hatred. Let us yield ourselves up utterly to the magnificence and tenderness of the sunrise, though the East End of London lies over the horizon. That very same Power, and it is no other, which blasts a country with the cholera or drives the best of us to madness has put the smile in a child's face and is the parent of Love. It is curious, too, that the curse seems in no way to qualify the blessing. The sweetness and majesty of Nature are so exquisite, so pure, that when they are before us we cannot imagine they could be better if they proceeded from an omnipotently merciful Being and no pestilence had ever been known. We must not worry ourselves with attempts at reconciliation. We must be satisfied with a hint here and there, with a ray of sunshine at our feet, and we must do what we can to make the best of what we possess. Hints and sunshine will not be wanting, and science, which was once considered to

be the enemy of religion, is dissolving by its later discoveries the old gross materialism, the source of so much despair.

The conduct of life is more important than speculation, but the lives of most of us are regulated by no principle whatever. We read our Bible, Thomas à Kempis, and Bunyan, and we are persuaded that our salvation lies in the perpetual struggle of the higher against the lower self, the spirit against the flesh, and that the success of the flesh is damnation. We take down Horace and Rabelais and we admit that the body also has its claims. We have no power to dominate both sets of books, and consequently they supersede one another alternately. Perhaps life is too large for any code we can as yet frame, and the dissolution of all codes, the fluid, unstable condition of which we complain, may be a necessary antecedent of new and more lasting combinations. One thing is certain, that there is not a single code now in existence which is not false; that the graduation of the vices and virtues is wrong, and that in the future it will be altered. We must not hand ourselves over to a despotism with no Divine right, even if there be a risk of

anarchy. In the determination of our own action, and in our criticism of other people, we must use the whole of ourselves and not mere fragments. If we do this we need not fear. We may suppose we are in danger because the stone tables of the Decalogue have gone to dust, but it is more dangerous to attempt to control men by fictions. Better no chart whatever than one which shows no actually existing perils, but warns us against Scylla, Charybdis, and the Cyclops. If we are perfectly honest with ourselves we shall not find it difficult to settle whether we ought to do this or that particular thing, and we may be content. The new legislation will come naturally at the appointed time, and it is not impossible to live while it is on the way.

AN APOLOGY

IN these latter days of anarchy and tumult, when there is no gospel of faith or morals, when democracy seems bent on falsifying every prediction of earlier democratic enthusiasts by developing worse dangers to liberty than any which our forefathers had to encounter, and when the misery of cities is so great, it appears absurd, not to say wrong, that we should sit still and read books. I am ashamed when I go into my own little room and open Milton or Shakespeare after looking at a newspaper or walking through the streets of London. I feel that Milton and Shakespeare are luxuries, and that I really belong to the class which builds palaces for its pleasure, although men and women may be starving on the roads.

Nevertheless, if I were placed on a platform I should be obliged to say, "My brethren, I

plainly perceive the world is all wrong, but I cannot see how it is to be set right," and I should descend the steps and go home. There may be others who have a clearer perception than mine, and who may be convinced that this way or that way lies regeneration. I do not wish to discourage them; I wish them God-speed, but I cannot help them nor become their disciple. Possibly I am doing nothing better than devising excuses for lotus-eating, but here they are.

To take up something merely because I am idle is useless. The message must come to me, and with such urgency that I cannot help delivering it. Nor is it of any use to attempt to give my natural thoughts a force which is not inherent in them.

The disease is often obvious, but the remedies are doubtful. The accumulation of wealth in a few hands, generally by swindling, is shocking, but if it were distributed to-morrow we should gain nothing. The working man objects to the millionaire, but would gladly become a millionaire himself, even if his million could be piled up in no other way than by sweating thousands of his fellows. The usurpation of

government by the ignorant will bring disaster, but how in these days could a wise man reign any longer than ignorance permitted him? The everlasting veerings of the majority, without any reason meanwhile for the change, show that, except on rare occasions of excitement, the opinion of the voters is of no significance. But when we are asked what substitute for elections can be proposed, none can be found. So with the relationship between man and woman, the marriage laws and divorce. The calculus has not been invented which can deal with such complexities. We are in the same position as that in which Leverrier and Adams would have been, if, observing the irregularities of Uranus, which led to the discovery of Neptune, they had known nothing but the first six books of Euclid and a little algebra.

There has never been any reformation as yet without dogma and supernaturalism. Ordinary people acknowledge no real reasons for virtue except heaven and hell-fire. When heaven and hell-fire cease to persuade, custom for a while is partly efficacious, but its strength soon decays. Some good men, knowing the uselessness of rational means to convert or to sustain their

fellows, have clung to dogma with hysterical energy, but without any genuine faith in it. They have failed, for dogma cannot be successful unless it be the *inevitable* expression of the inward conviction.

The voices now are so many and so contradictory that it is impossible to hear any one of them distinctly, no matter what its claim on our attention may be. The newspaper, the circulating library, the free library, and the magazine are doing their best to prevent unity of direction and the din and confusion of tongues beget a doubt whether literature and the printing press have actually been such a blessing to the race as enlightenment universally proclaims them to be.

The great currents of human destiny seem more than ever to move by forces which tend to no particular point. There is a drift, tremendous and overpowering, due to nobody in particular, but to hundreds of millions of small impulses. Achilles is dead, and the turn of the Myrmidons has come.

"Myrmidons, race féconde
Myrmidons,
Enfin nous commandons :

Jupiter livre le monde
Aux Myrmidons, aux Myrmidons.

Voyant qu' Achille succombe,
Ses Myrmidons, hors des rangs,
Disent : Dansons sur sa tombe
Ses petits vont être grands."

My last defence is that the Universe is an organic unity, and so subtle and far-reaching are the invisible threads which pass from one part of it to another that it is impossible to limit the effect which even an insignificant life may have. "Were a single dust-atom destroyed, the universe would collapse."

" . . . who of men can tell
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,
The earth its dower of river, wood, and vale,
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble-stones,
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet
If human souls did never kiss and greet ? "

BELIEF, UNBELIEF, AND SUPERSTITION

TRUE belief is rare and difficult. There is no security that the fictitious beliefs which have been obtained by no genuine mental process, that is to say, are not vitally held, may not be discarded for those which are exactly contrary. We flatter ourselves that we have secured a method and freedom of thought which will not permit us to be the victims of the absurdities of the Middle Ages, but, in fact, there is no solid obstacle to our conversion to some new grotesque religion more miraculous than Roman Catholicism. Modern scepticism, distinguishing it from scholarly scepticism, is nothing but stupidity or weakness. Few people like to confess outright that they do not believe in a God, although the belief in a personal devil is considered to be a sign of imbecility. Never-

theless, men, as a rule, have no ground for believing in God a whit more respectable than for disbelief in a devil. The devil is not seen: nor is God seen. The work of the devil is as obvious as that of God. Nay, as the devil is a limited personality, belief in him is not encumbered with the perplexities which arise when we attempt to apprehend the infinite Being. Belief may often be tested; that is to say, we may be able to discover whether it is an active belief or not by inquiring what disbelief it involves. So also the test of disbelief is its correspondent belief.

Superstition is a name generally given to a few only of those beliefs for which it is imagined that there is no sufficient support, such as the belief in ghosts, witches, and, if we are Protestants, in miracles performed after a certain date. Why these particular beliefs have been selected as solely deserving to be called superstitious it is not easy to discover. If the name is to be extended to all beliefs which we have not attempted to verify, it must include the largest part of those we possess. We vote at elections as we are told to vote by the newspaper which we happen to read, and our

opinions upon a particular policy are based upon no surer foundation than those of the Papist on the authenticity of the lives of the Saints.

Superstition is a matter of *relative* evidence. A thousand years ago it was not so easy as it is now to obtain rigid demonstration in any department except mathematics. Much that was necessarily the basis of action was as incapable of proof as the story of St. George and the Dragon, and consequently it is hardly fair to say that the dark ages were more superstitious than our own. Nor does every belief, even in supernatural objects, deserve the name of superstition. Suppose that the light which struck down St. Paul on his journey to Damascus was due to his own imagination, the belief that it came from Jesus enthroned in the heavens was a sign of strength and not of weakness. Beliefs of this kind, in so far as they exalt man, prove greatness and generosity, and may be truer than the scepticism which is formally justified in rejecting them. If Christ never rose from the dead, the women who waited at the sepulchre were nearer to reality than the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection.

There is a half-belief, which we find in Virgil that is not superstition, nor inconstancy, nor cowardice. A child-like faith in the old creed is no longer possible, but it is equally impossible to surrender it. I refer now not to those who select from it what they think to be in accordance with their reason, and throw overboard the remainder with no remorse, but rather to those who cannot endure to touch with sacrilegious hands the ancient histories and doctrines which have been the depositaries of so much that is eternal, and who dread lest with the destruction of a story something precious should also be destroyed. The so-called superstitious ages were not merely transitionary. Our regret that they have departed is to be explained not by a mere idealisation of the past, but by a conviction that truths have been lost, or at least have been submerged. Perhaps some day they may be recovered, and in some other form may again become our religion.

JUDAS ISCARIOT—WHAT CAN BE SAID FOR HIM?

JUDAS ISCARIOT has become to Christian people an object of horror more loathsome than even the devil himself. The devil rebelled because he could not brook subjection to the Son of God, a failing which was noble compared with treachery to the Son of man. The hatred of Judas is not altogether virtuous. We compound thereby for our neglect of Jesus and His precepts: it is easier to establish our Christianity by cursing the wretched servant than by following his Master. The heinousness also of the crime in Gethsemane has been aggravated by the exaltation of Jesus to the Redeemership of the world. All that can be known of Judas is soon collected. He was chosen one

of the twelve apostles, and received their high commission to preach the kingdom of heaven, to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, and cast out devils. He was appointed treasurer to the community. John in telling the story of the anointing at Bethany says that he was a thief, but John also makes him the sole objector to the waste of the ointment. According to the other evangelists all the disciples objected. Since he remained in office it could hardly have been known at the time of the visit to Bethany that he was dishonest, nor could it have been known at any time to Matthew and Mark, for they would not have lost the opportunity of adding such a touch to the portrait. The probability, therefore, is that the robbery of the bag is unhistorical. When the chief priests and scribes sought how they might apprehend Jesus they made a bargain with Judas to deliver Him to them for thirty pieces of silver. He was present at the Last Supper but went and betrayed his Lord. A few hours afterwards, when he found out that condemnation to death followed, he repented himself and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to his employers, declared that he had sinned in betraying

innocent blood, cast down the money at their feet, and went and hanged himself.

This is all that is discoverable about Judas, and it has been considered sufficient for a damnation deeper than any allotted to the worst of the sons of Adam. Dante places him in the lowest round of the ninth or last of the hellish circles, where he is eternally "champed" by Satan, "bruised as with ponderous engine," his head within the diabolic jaws and "plying the feet without." In the absence of a biography with details, it is impossible to make out with accuracy what the real Judas was. We can, however, by dispassionate examination of the facts determine their sole import, and if we indulge in inferences we can deduce those which are fairly probable. As Judas was treasurer, he must have been trusted. He could hardly have been naturally covetous, for he had given up in common with the other disciples much, if not all, to follow Jesus. The thirty pieces of silver—some four or five pounds of our money—could not have been considered by him as a sufficient bribe for the ignominy of a treason which was to end in legal murder. He ought perhaps to have been able to measure

the ferocity of an established ecclesiastical order and to have known what would have been the consequence of handing over to it perfect, and therefore heretical, sincerity and purity, but there is no evidence that he did know: nay, we are distinctly informed, as we have just seen, that when he became aware what was going to happen his sorrow for his wicked deed took a very practical shape.

We cannot allege with confidence that it was any permanent loss of personal attachment to Jesus which brought about his defection. It came when the belief in a theocracy near at hand filled the minds of the disciples. These ignorant Galilean fishermen expected that in a very short time they would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The custodian of the bag, gifted with more common sense than his colleagues, probably foresaw the danger of a collision with Rome, and may have desired by a timely arrest to prevent an open revolt, which would have meant immediate destruction of the whole band with women and children. Can any position be imagined more irritating that that of a careful man of business who is keeper of the purse for a company of

heedless enthusiasts professing complete indifference to the value of money, misunderstanding the genius of their chief, and looking out every morning for some sign in the clouds, a prophecy of their immediate appointment as vicegerents of a power that would supersede the awful majesty of the Imperial city? He may have been heated by a long series of petty annoyances to such a degree that at last they may have ended in rage and a sudden flinging loose of himself from the society. It is the impulsive man who frequently suffers what appears to be inversion, and Judas was impulsive exceedingly. Matthew, and Matthew only, says that Judas asked for money from the chief priests. "What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?" According to Mark, whose account of the transaction is the same as Luke's, "Judas . . . went unto the chief priests to betray Him unto them. And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money." If the priests were the tempters, a slight difference is established in favour of Judas, but this we will neglect. The sin of taking money and joining in that last meal in any case is black enough, although, as

we have before pointed out, Judas did not at the time know what the other side of the bargain was. Admitting, however, everything that can fairly be urged against him, all that can be affirmed with certainty is that we are in the presence of strange and unaccountable inconsistency, and that an apostle who had abandoned his home, who had followed Jesus for three years amidst contempt and persecution, and who at last slew himself in self-reproach, could be capable of committing the meanest of sins. Is the co-existence of irreconcilable opposites in human nature anything new? The story of Judas may be of some value if it reminds us that man is incalculable, and that, although in theory, and no doubt in reality, he is a unity, the point from which the divergent forces in him rise is often infinitely beyond our exploration; a lesson not merely in psychology but for our own guidance, a warning that side by side with heroic virtues there may sleep in us not only detestable vices, but vices by which those virtues are contradicted and even for the time annihilated. The mode of betrayal, with a kiss, has justly excited loathing, but it is totally unintelligible. Why should he

have taken the trouble to be so base when the movement of a finger would have sufficed? Why was any sign necessary to indicate one who was so well known? The supposition that the devil compelled him to superfluous villainy in order that he might be secured with greater certainty and tortured with greater subtlety is one that can hardly be entertained except by theologians. It is equally difficult to understand why Jesus submitted to such an insult, and why Peter should not have smitten down its perpetrator. Peter was able to draw his sword, and it would have been safer and more natural to kill Judas than to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. John, who shows a special dislike to Judas, knows nothing of the kiss. According to John, Jesus asked the soldiers whom they sought, and then stepped boldly forward and declared Himself. "Judas," adds John, "was standing with them." As John took such particular notice of what happened, the absence of the kiss in his account can hardly have been accidental. It is a sound maxim in criticism that what is simply difficult of explanation is likely to be authentic. An awkward reading in a manuscript is to be pre-

ferred to one which is easier. But an historical improbability, especially if no corroboration of it is to be found in a better authority, may be set aside, and in this case we are justified in neglecting the kiss. Whatever may have been the exact shade of darkness in the crime of Judas, it was avenged with singular swiftness, and he himself was the avenger. He did not slink away quietly and poison himself in a ditch. He boldly encountered the sacred college, confessed his sin, and the innocence of the man they were about to crucify. Compared with these pious miscreants who had no scruples about corrupting one of the disciples, but shuddered at the thought of putting back into the treasury the money they had taken from it, Judas becomes noble. His remorse is so unendurable that it drives him to suicide.

If a record could be kept of those who have abjured Jesus through love of gold, through fear of the world or of the scribes and Pharisees, we should find many who are considered quite respectable, or have even been canonised, and who, nevertheless, much more worthily than Iscariot, are entitled to "champing" by the jaws of Sathanas. Not a single scrap from Judas

himself has reached us. He underwent no trial, and is condemned without plea or excuse on his own behalf, and with no cross-examination of the evidence. No witnesses have been called to his character. What would his friends at Kerioth have said for him? What would Jesus have said? If He had met Judas with the halter in his hand would He not have stopped him? Ah! I can see the Divine touch on the shoulder, the passionate prostration of the repentant in the dust, the hands gently lifting him, the forgiveness because he knew not what he did, and the seal of a kiss indeed from the sacred lips.

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S USE OF THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE "BRIDE OF LAMMERMOOR"

THE supernatural machinery in Sir Walter Scott's *Monastery* is generally and, no doubt, correctly, set down as a mistake. Sir Walter fails, not because the White Lady of Avenel is a miracle, but because being miraculous, she is made to do what sometimes is not worthy of her. This, however, is not always true, for nothing can be finer than the change in Halbert Glendinning after he has seen the spirit, and the great master himself has never drawn a nobler stroke than that in which he describes the effect which intercourse with her has had upon Mary. Halbert, on the morning of the duel between himself and Sir Piercie Shafton, is trying to persuade her that he intends

no harm, and that he and Sir Piercie are going on a hunting expedition. "Say not thus," said the maiden, interrupting him, "say not thus to me. Others thou may'st deceive, but me thou can'st not. There has been that in me from the earliest youth which fraud flies from, and which imposture cannot deceive." The transforming influence of the Lady is here just what it should be, and the consequence is that she becomes a reality.

But it is in the *Bride of Lammermoor* more particularly that the use of the supernatural is not only blameless but indispensable. We begin to rise to it in that scene in which the Master of Ravenswood meets Alice. "Begone from among them," she says, "and if God has destined vengeance on the oppressor's house, do not you be the instrument. . . . If you remain here, her destruction or yours, or that of both, will be the inevitable consequence of her misplaced attachment." A little further on, with great art, Scott having duly prepared us by what has preceded, adds intensity and colour. He apologises for the "tinge of superstition," but, not believing, he evidently believes, and we justly surrender ourselves to him. The Master of Ravenswood after the insult received

from Lady Ashton wanders round the Mermaiden's Well on his way to Wolf's Crag and sees the wraith of Alice. Scott makes horse as well as man afraid so that we may not immediately dismiss the apparition as a mere ordinary product of excitement. Alice at that moment was dying, and had "prayed powerfully that she might see her master's son and renew her warning." Observe the difference between this and any vulgar ghost story. From the very first we feel that the Superior Powers are against this match, and that it will be cursed. The beginning of the curse lies far back in the hereditary temper of the Ravenswoods, in the intrigues of the Ashtons, and in the feuds of the times. When Love intervenes we discover in an instant that he is not sent by the gods to bring peace, but that he is the awful instrument of destruction. The spectral appearance of Alice at the hour of her departure, on the very spot "on which Lucy Ashton had reclined listening to the fatal tale of woe . . . holding up her shrivelled hand as if to prevent his coming more near," is necessary in order to intimate that the interdict is pronounced not by a mortal human being but by a dread, supernal authority.

SEPTEMBER, 1798. "THE LYRICAL BALLADS."

THE year 1798 was a year of great excitement: England was alone in the struggle against Buonaparte; the mutiny at the Nore had only just been quelled: the 3 per cent. Consols had been marked at 49 or 50; the Gazettes were occupied with accounts of bloody captures of French ships; Ireland may be said to have been in rebellion, and horrible murders were committed there; the King sent a message to Parliament telling it that an invasion might be expected and that it was to be assisted by "incendiaries" at home; and the Archbishop of Canterbury and eleven bishops passed a resolution declaring that if the French should land, or a dangerous insurrection should break out, it would be the duty of the clergy to take up arms against an enemy whom the Bishop of Rochester described

as "instigated by that desperate malignity against the Faith he has abandoned, which in all ages has marked the horrible character of the vile apostate."

In the midst of this raving political excitement three human beings were to be found who although they were certainly not unmoved by it, were able to detach themselves from it when they pleased, and to seclude themselves in a privacy impenetrable even to an echo of the tumult around them.

In April or May, 1798, the *Nightingale* was written, and these are the sights and sounds which were then in young Coleridge's eyes and ears:—

"No cloud, no relique of the sunken day
Distinguishes the West, no long thin slip
Of sullen light, no obscure trembling hues.
Come, we will rest on this old mossy bridge!
You see the glimmer of the stream beneath,
But hear no murmuring: it flows silently,
O'er its soft bed of verdure. All is still,
A balmy night! and tho' the stars be dim,
Yet let us think upon the vernal showers
That gladden the green earth, and we shall find
A pleasure in the dimness of the stars."

We happen also to have Dorothy Words-

worth's journal for April and May. Here are a few extracts from it:—

April 6th.—"Went a part of the way home with Coleridge. . . . The spring still advancing very slowly. The horse-chestnuts budding, and the hedgerows beginning to look green, but nothing fully expanded."

April 9th.—"Walked to Stowey. . . . The sloe in blossom, the hawthorns green, the larches in the park changed from black to green in two or three days. Met Coleridge in returning."

April 12th.—". . . The spring advances rapidly, multitudes of primroses, dog-violets, periwinkles, stitchwort."

April 27th.—"Coleridge breakfasted and drank tea, strolled in the wood in the morning, went with him in the evening through the wood, afterwards walked on the hills: the moon; a many-coloured sea and sky."

May 6th, Sunday.—"Expected the painter [1] and Coleridge. A rainy morning—very pleasant in the evening. Met Coleridge as we were

[1] Hazlitt.

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walking out. Went with him to Stowey; heard the nightingale; saw a glow-worm."

What was it which these three young people (for Dorothy certainly must be included as one of its authors) proposed to achieve by their book? Coleridge, in the *Biographia Literaria*, says (vol. ii. c. 1): "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm, which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the poetry of nature. The thought suggested itself—(to which of us I do not recollect)—that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the agents and incidents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions, as would naturally

accompany such situations, supposing them real. And real in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them, when they present themselves.

"In this idea originated the plan of the LYRICAL BALLADS; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic; yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday and to excite a feeling *analogous to the supernatural*,[1] by awakening the mind's attention to the

[1] Italics mine.—M. R.

lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand.

"With this view I wrote THE ANCIENT MARINER, and was preparing, among other poems, THE DARK LADIE and the CHRISTABEL, in which I should have more nearly have realised my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt."

Coleridge, when he wrote to Cottle offering him the *Lyrical Ballads*, affirms that "the volumes offered to you are, to a certain degree, *one work in kind*"[1] (*Reminiscences*, p. 179); and Wordsworth declares, "I should not, however, have requested this assistance, had I not believed that the poems of my Friend would in a great measure *have the same tendency as my own*,[1] and that though there would be found a difference, there would be found no discordance in the colours of our style; as our opinions

[1] talics mine.—M. R.

on the subject of poetry do almost entirely coincide" (Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800).

It is a point carefully to be borne in mind that we have the explicit and contemporary authority of both poets that their aim was the same.

There are difficulties in the way of believing that *The Ancient Mariner* was written for the *Lyrical Ballads*. It was planned in 1797 and was originally intended for a magazine. Nevertheless, it may be asserted that the purpose of *The Ancient Mariner* and of *Christabel* (which was originally intended for the *Ballads*) was, as their author said, *truth*, living truth. He was the last man in the world to care for a story simply as a chain of events with no significance, and in these poems the supernatural, by interpenetration with human emotions, comes closer to us than an event of daily life. In return the emotions themselves, by means of the supernatural expression, gain intensity. The texture is so subtly interwoven that it is difficult to illustrate the point by example, but take the following lines:—

"Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea!

And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie:
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on; and so did I.

* * * *

The self-same moment I could pray:
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

* * * *

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colours came.

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
Oh, Christ! what saw I there!

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood."

Coleridge's marginal gloss to these last stanzas is "The angelic spirits leave the dead bodies, and appear in their own forms of light."

Once more from *Christabel*:—

> "The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
> She nothing sees—no sight but one!
> The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
> I know not how, in fearful wise,
> So deeply had she drunken in
> That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
> That all her features were resigned
> To this sole image in her mind:
> And passively did imitate
> That look of dull and treacherous hate."

What Wordsworth intended we have already heard from Coleridge, and Wordsworth confirms him. It was, says the Preface of 1802, "to present ordinary things to the mind in an unusual way." In Wordsworth the miraculous inherent in the commonplace, but obscured by "the film of familiarity," is restored to it. This translation is effected by the imagination, which is not fancy nor dreaming, as Wordsworth is careful to warn us, but that power by which we see things as they are. The authors of *The Ancient Mariner* and *Simon Lee* are justified in claiming a common object. It is to prove that the metaphysical in Shakespeare's sense of the word interpenetrates the physical, and serves to make us see and feel it.

Poetry, if it is to be good for anything, must help us to live. It is to this we come at last in our criticism, and if it does not help us to live it may as well disappear, no matter what its fine qualities may be. The help to live, however, that is most wanted is not remedies against great sorrows. The chief obstacle to the enjoyment of life is its dulness and the weariness which invades us because there is nothing to be seen or done of any particular value. If the supernatural becomes natural and the natural becomes supernatural, the world regains its splendour and charm. Lines may be drawn from their predecessors to Coleridge and the Wordsworths, but the work they did was distinctly original, and renewed proof was given of the folly of despair even when fertility seems to be exhausted. There is always a hidden conduit open into an unknown region whence at any moment streams may rush and renew the desert with foliage and flowers.

The reviews which followed the publication of the *Lyrical Ballads* were nearly all unfavourable. Even Southey discovered nothing in *The Ancient Mariner* but "a Dutch attempt at

German sublimity." A certain learned pig thought it "the strangest story of a cock and bull that he ever saw on paper," and not a single critic, not even the one or two who had any praise to offer, discerned the secret of the book. The publisher was so alarmed that he hastily sold his stock. Nevertheless Coleridge, Wordsworth, and his sister quietly went off to Germany without the least disturbance of their faith, and the *Ballads* are alive to this day.

SOME NOTES ON MILTON

MUCH of the criticism on Milton, if not hostile, is apologetic, and it is considered quite correct to say we "do not care" for him. Partly this indifference is due to his Nonconformity. The "superior" Englishman who makes a jest of the doctrines and ministers of the Established Church always pays homage to it because it is *respectable*, and sneers at Dissent. Another reason why Milton does not take his proper place is that his theme is a theology which for most people is no longer vital. A religious poem if it is to be deeply felt must embody a living faith. The great poems of antiquity are precious to us in proportion to our acceptance, now, as fact, of what they tell us about heaven and earth. There are only a few persons at present

who perceive that in substance the account which was given in the seventeenth century of the relation between man and God is immortal and worthy of epic treatment. A thousand years hence a much better estimate of Milton will be possible than that which can be formed to-day. We attribute to him mechanic construction in dead material because it is dead to ourselves. Even Mr. Ruskin who was far too great not to recognise in part at least Milton's claims, says that "Milton's account of the most important event in his whole system of the universe, the fall of the angels, is evidently unbelievable to himself; and the more so, that it is wholly founded on, and in a great part spoiled and degraded from, Hesiod's account of the decisive war of the younger gods with the Titans. The rest of his poem is a picturesque drama, in which every artifice of invention is visibly and consciously employed; not a single fact being for an instant conceived as tenable by any living faith" (*Sesame and Lilies*, section iii.).

Mr. Mark Pattison, quoting part of this passage, remarks with justice, "on the contrary, we shall not rightly apprehend either the poetry or

the character of the poet until we feel that throughout *Paradise Lost*, as in *Paradise Regained* and *Samson*, Milton felt himself to be standing on the sure ground of fact and reality" (*English Men of Letters*—Milton, p. 186, ed. 1879).

St. Jude for ages had been sufficient authority for the angelic revolt, and in a sense it was a reasonable dogma, for although it did not explain the mystery of the origin of evil it pushed it a step further backwards, and without such a revolt the Christian scheme does not well hold together. So also with the entrance of the devil into the serpent. It is not expressly taught in any passage of the canonical Scriptures, but to the Church and to Milton it was as indisputable as the presence of sin in the world. Milton, I repeat, *believed* in the framework of his poem, and unless we can concede this to him we ought not to attempt to criticise him. He was impelled to turn his religion into poetry in order to bring it closer to him. The religion of every Christian if it is real is a poem. He pictures a background of Holy Land scenery, and he creates a Jesus who continually converses with him and reveals

to him much more than is found in the fragmentary details of the Gospels. When Milton goes beyond his documents he does not imagine for the purpose of filling up: the additions are expression.

Milton belonged to that order of poets whom the finite does not satisfy. Like Wordsworth, but more eminently, he was "powerfully affected" only by that "which is conversant with or turns upon 'ınfinity," and man is to him a being with such a relationship to infinity that Heaven and Hell contend over him. Every touch which sets forth the eternal glory of Heaven and the scarcely subordinate power of Hell magnifies him. Johnson, whose judgment on Milton is unsatisfactory because he will not deliver himself sufficiently to beauty which he must have recognised, nevertheless says of the *Paradise Lost*, that "its end is to raise the thoughts above sublunary cares," and this is true. The other great epic poems worthy to be compared with Milton's, the Iliad, Odyssey, Æneid, and Divine Comedy, all agree in representing man as an object of the deepest solicitude to the gods or God. Milton's conception of God

is higher than Homer's, Virgil's, or Dante's, but the care of the Miltonic God for his offspring is greater, and the profound truth unaffected by Copernican discoveries and common to all these poets is therefore more impressive in Milton than in the others.

There is nothing which the most gifted of men can create that is not mixed up with earth, and Milton, too, works it up with his gold. The weakness of the *Paradise Lost* is not, as Johnson affirms, its lack of human interest, for the *Prometheus Bound* has just as little, nor is Johnson's objection worth anything that the angels are sometimes corporeal and at other times independent of material laws. Spirits could not be represented to a human mind unless they were in a measure subject to the conditions of time and space. The principal defect in *Paradise Lost* is the justification which the Almighty gives of the creation of man with a liability to fall. It would have been better if Milton had contented himself with telling the story of the Satanic insurrection, of its suppression, of its author's revenge, of the expulsion from Paradise, and the promise of a Redeemer. But he wanted to "justify the ways of God to

man," and in order to do this he thought it was necessary to show that man must be endowed with freedom of will, and consequently could not be directly preserved from yielding to the assaults of Satan.

Paradise Regained comes, perhaps, closer to us than *Paradise Lost* because its temptations are more nearly our own, and every amplification which Milton introduces is designed to make them more completely ours than they seem to be in the New Testament. It has often been urged against *Paradise Regained* that Jesus recovered Paradise for man by the Atonement and not merely by resistance to the devil's wiles, but inasmuch as Paradise was lost by the devil's triumph through human weakness it is natural that *Paradise Regained* should present the triumph of the Redeemer's strength. It is this victory which proves Jesus to be the Son of God and consequently able to save us.

He who has now become incarnated for our redemption is that same Messiah who, when He rode forth against the angelic rebels,

> "into terror chang'd
> His count'nance too severe to be beheld,
> And full of wrath bent on his enemies."

It is He who

> "on his impious foes right onward drove,
> Gloomy as night:"

whose right hand grasped

> "ten thousand thunders, which he sent
> Before him, such as in their souls infix'd
> Plagues."
>
> (*P. L.* vi. 824–38.)

Now as Son of Man he is confronted with that same Archangel, and he conquers by "strong sufferance." He comes with no four-fold visage of a charioteer flashing thick flames, no eye which glares lightning, no victory eagle-winged and quiver near her with three-bolted thunder stored, but in "weakness," and with this he is to "overcome satanic strength."

Milton sees in the temptation to turn the stones into bread a devilish incitement to use miraculous powers and not to trust the Heavenly Father.

> "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust,
> Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?"
>
> (*P. R.* i. 355–6.)

Finding his enemy steadfast, Satan disappears,

> "bowing low
> His gray dissimulation,"
>
> (*P. R.* i. 497–8.)

and calls to council his peers. He disregards the proposal of Belial to attempt the seduction of Jesus with women. If he is vulnerable it will be to objects

> "such as have more shew
> Of worth, of honour, glory, and popular praise,
> Rocks whereon greatest men have oftest wreck'd;
> Or that which only seems to satisfy
> Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond."
> (*P. R.* ii. 226–30.)

The former appeal is first of all renewed. "Tell me," says Satan,

> "'if food were now before thee set,
> Would'st thou not eat?' 'Thereafter as I like
> The giver,' answered Jesus."
> (*P. R.* ii. 320–22.)

A banquet is laid, and Satan invites Jesus to partake of it.

> "What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
> These are not fruits forbidd'n."
> (*P. R.* ii. 368–9.)

But Jesus refuses to touch the devil's meat—

> "Thy pompous delicacies I contemn,
> And count thy specious gifts no gifts, but guiles."
> (*P. R.* ii. 390–1.

So they were, for at a word

> "Both table and provision vanish'd quite,
> With sound of harpies' wings and talons heard."
> (*P. R.* ii. 402–3.)

If but one grain of that enchanted food had been eaten, or one drop of that enchanted liquor had been drunk, there would have been no Cross, no Resurrection, no salvation for humanity.

The temptation on the mountain is expanded by Milton through the close of the second book, the whole of the third and part of the fourth. It is a temptation of peculiar strength because it is addressed to an aspiration which Jesus has acknowledged.

> "Yet this not all
> To which my spirit aspir'd: victorious deeds
> Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts."
> (*P. R.* i. 214–16.)

But he denies that the glory of mob-applause is worth anything.

> "What is glory but the blaze of fame,
> The people's praise, if always praise unmixt?
> And what the people but a herd confus'd,
> A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
> Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?"
> (*P. R.* iii. 47–51.)

To the Jesus of the New Testament this answer is, in a measure, inappropriate. He would not have called the people "a herd con-

fus'd, a miscellaneous rabble." But although inappropriate it is Miltonic. The devil then tries the Saviour with a more subtle lure, an appeal to duty.

> " If kingdom move thee not, let move thee zeal
> And duty ; zeal and duty are not slow ;
> But on occasion's forelock watchful wait.
> They themselves rather are occasion best,
> Zeal of thy father's house, duty to free
> Thy country from her heathen servitude."
> (*P. R.* iii. 171–6.)

But zeal and duty, the endeavour to hurry that which cannot and must not be hurried may be a suggestion from hell.

> " If of my reign prophetic writ hath told
> That it shall never end, so when begin
> The Father in His purpose hath decreed."
> (*P. R.* iii. 184–6.)

Acquiescence, a conviction of the uselessness of individual or organised effort to anticipate what only slow evolution can bring, is characteristic of increasing years, and was likely enough to be the temper of Milton when he had seen the failure of the effort to make actual on earth the kingdom of Heaven. The temptation is developed in such a way that every point supposed to be weak is attacked. " You may be

what you claim to be," insinuates the devil, "but are rustic."

> "Thy life hath yet been private, most part spent
> At home, scarce view'd the Galilean towns,
> And once a year Jerusalem."
> (*P. R.* iii. 232–4.)

Experience and alliances are plausibly urged as indispensable for success. But Jesus knew that the sum total of a man's power for good is precisely what of good there is in him and that if it be expressed even in the simplest form, all its strength is put forth and its office is fulfilled. To suppose that it can be augmented by machinery is a foolish delusion. The

> "projects deep
> Of enemies, of aids, battles and leagues,
> Plausible to the world"
> (*P. R.* iii. 391–3.)

are to the Founder of the kingdom not of this world "worth naught." Another side of the mountain is tried. Rome is presented with Tiberius at Capreæ. Could it possibly be anything but a noble deed to

> "expel this monster from his throne
> Now made a sty, and in his place ascending,
> A victor people free from servile yoke!"
> (*P. R.* iv. 100–102.)

"*And with my help thou may'st.*" With the devil's help and not without can this glorious revolution be achieved! "For him," is the Divine reply, "I was not sent." The attack is then directly pressed.

> "The kingdoms of the world, to thee I give;
> For, giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
> No trifle; yet with this rèserve, not else,
> On this condition, if thou wilt fall down
> And worship me as thy superior lord."
> (*P. R.* iv. 163-7.)

This, then, is the drift and meaning of it all. The answer is taken verbally from the gospel.

> "'Thou shalt worship
> The Lord thy God, and only Him shalt serve.'"
> (*P. R.* iv. 176-7.)

That is to say, Thou shalt submit thyself to God's commands and God's methods and thou shalt submit thyself to *no other.*

Omitting the Athenian and philosophic episode, which is unnecessary and a little unworthy even of the Christian poet, we encounter not an amplification of the Gospel story but an interpolation which is entirely Milton's own. Night gathers and a new assault is delivered in darkness. Jesus wakes in the storm which rages round Him. The diabolic hostility is

open and avowed and He hears the howls and shrieks of the infernals. He cannot banish them though He is so far master of Himself that He is able to sit "unappall'd in calm and sinless peace." He has to endure the hellish threats and tumult through the long black hours

> "till morning fair
> Came forth with pilgrim steps in amice gray,
> Who with her radiant finger still'd the roar
> Of thunder, chas'd the clouds, and laid the winds,
> And grisly spectres, which the Fiend had rais'd
> To tempt the Son of God with terrors dire.
> But now the sun with more effectual beams
> Had cheer'd the face of earth, and dri'd the wet
> From drooping plant, or dropping tree; the birds,
> Who all things now beheld more fresh and green,
> After a night of storm so ruinous,
> Clear'd up their choicest notes in bush and spray
> To gratulate the sweet return of morn."
>
> (*P. R.* iv. 426–38.)

There is nothing perhaps in *Paradise Lost* which possesses the peculiar quality of this passage, nothing which like these verses brings into the eyes the tears which cannot be repressed when a profound experience is set to music.

The temptation on the pinnacle occupies but a few lines only of the poem. Hitherto Satan

admits that Jesus had conquered, but he had done no more than any wise and good man could do.

> " Now show thy progeny ; if not to stand,
> Cast thyself down ; safely, if Son of God ;
> For it is written, ' He will give command
> Concerning thee to His angels ; in their hands
> They shall uplift thee, lest at any time
> Thou chance to dash thy foot against a stone.' "
> (*P. R.* iv. 554–9.)

The promise of Divine aid is made in mockery.

> " To whom thus Jesus : ' Also it is written,
> Tempt not the Lord thy God.' He said, and stood :
> But Satan, smitten with amazement, fell."
> (*P. R.* iv. 560–2.)

It is not meant, " thou shalt not tempt *me*," but rather, " it is not permitted me to tempt God." In this extreme case Jesus depends on God's protection. This is the devil's final defeat and the seraphic company for which our great Example had refused to ask instantly surrounds and receives him. Angelic quires

> " the Son of God, our Saviour meek,
> Sung victor, and from heavenly feast refresh't,
> Brought on His way with joy ; He unobserv'd,
> Home to His mother's house private return'd."
> (*P. R.* iv. 636–9.)

Warton wished to expunge this passage, considering it an unworthy conclusion. It is to be hoped that there are many readers of Milton who are able to see what is the value of these four lines, particularly of the last.

It is hardly necessary to say more in order to show how peculiarly Milton is endowed with that quality which is possessed by all great poets —the power to keep in contact with the soul of man.

THE MORALITY OF BYRON'S POETRY. "THE CORSAIR."

[This is an abstract of an essay four times as long written many years ago. Although so much has been struck out, the substance is unaltered, and the conclusion is valid for the author now as then.]

BYRON above almost all other poets, at least in our day, has been set down as immoral. In reality he is moral, using the word in its proper sense, and he is so, not only in detached passages, but in the general drift of most of his poetry. We will take as an example "The Corsair."

Conrad is not a debauched buccaneer. He was not—

> "by Nature sent
> To lead the guilty—guilt's worst instrument."

He had been betrayed by misplaced confidence.

" Doom'd by his very virtues for a dupe,
He cursed those virtues as the cause of ill,
And not the traitors who betray'd him still;
Nor deem'd that gifts bestow'd on better men
Had left him joy, and means to give again,
Fear'd—shunn'd—belied—ere youth had lost her force,
He hated man too much to feel remorse,
And thought the voice of wrath a sacred call,
To pay the injuries of some on all."

Conrad was not, and could not be, mean and selfish. A selfish Conrad would be an absurdity. His motives are not gross—

" he shuns the grosser joys of sense,
" His mind seems nourished by that abstinence."

He is protected by a charm against undistinguishing lust—

" Though fairest captives daily met his eye,
He shunn'd, nor sought, but coldly pass'd them by;"

and even Gulnare, his deliverer, fails to seduce him.

Mr. Ruskin observes that Byron makes much of courage. It is Conrad, the leader, who undertakes the dangerous errand of surprising Seyd; it is he who determines to save the harem. His courage is not the mere excitement of battle When he is captured—

"A conqueror's more than captive's air is seen,"

and he is not insensible to all fear.

"Each has some fear, and he who least betrays,
The only hypocrite deserving praise.
* * * * *
One thought alone he could not—dared not meet—
'Oh, how these tidings will Medora greet?'"

Gulnare announces his doom to him, but he is calm. He cannot stoop even to pray. He has deserted his Maker, and it would be baseness now to prostrate himself before Him.

"I have no thought to mock his throne with prayer
Wrung from the coward crouching of despair;
It is enough—I breathe—and I can bear."

He has no martyr-hope with which to console himself; his endurance is of the finest order—simple, sheer resolution, a resolve that with no reward, he will never disgrace himself. He knows what it is

"To count the hours that struggle to thine end,
With not a friend to animate, and tell
To other ears that death became thee well,"

but he does not break down.

Gulnare tries to persuade him that the only way by which he can save himself from tortures

and impalement is by the assassination of Seyd, but he refuses to accept the terms—

"Who spares a woman's seeks not slumber's life"—

and dismisses her. When she has done the deed and he sees the single spot of blood upon her, he, the Corsair, is unmanned as he had never been in battle, prison, or by consciousness of guilt.

"But ne'er from strife—captivity—remorse—
From all his feelings in their inmost force—
So thrill'd—so shudder'd every creeping vein,
As now they froze before that purple stain.
That spot of blood, that light but guilty streak,
Had banish'd all the beauty from her cheek!"

The Corsair's misanthropy had not destroyed him. Small creatures alone are wholly converted into spite and scepticism by disappointment and repulse. Those who are larger avenge themselves by devotion. Conrad's love for Medora was intensified and exalted by his hatred of the world.

"Yes, it was Love—unchangeable—unchanged,
Felt but for one from whom he never ranged;"

and she was worthy of him, the woman who could sing—

"Deep in my soul that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal—but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been."

He finds Medora dead, and—

"his mother's softness crept
To those wild eyes, which like an infant's wept."

If his crimes and love could be weighed in a celestial balance, weight being apportioned to the rarity and value of the love, which would descend?

The points indicated in Conrad's character are not many, but they are sufficient for its delineation, and it is a moral character. We must, of course, get rid of the notion that the relative magnitude of the virtues and vices according to the priest or society is authentic. A reversion to the natural or divine scale has been almost the sole duty preached to us by

every prophet. If we could incorporate Conrad with ourselves we should find that the greater part of what is worst in us would be neutralised. The sins of which we are ashamed, the dirty, despicable sins, Conrad could not have committed; and in these latter days they are perhaps the most injurious.

We do not understand how moral it is to yield unreservedly to enthusiasm, to the impression which great objects would fain make upon us, and to embody that impression in worthy language. It is rare to meet now even with young people who will abandon themselves to a heroic emotion, or who, if they really feel it, do not try to belittle it in expression. Byron's poetry, above most, tempts and almost compels surrender to that which is beyond the commonplace self.

It is not true that "The Corsair" is insincere. He who hears a note of insincerity in Conrad and Medora may have ears, but they must be those of the translated Bottom who was proud of having "a reasonable good ear in music." Byron's romance has been such a power exactly because men felt that it was not fiction and that his was one of the strongest minds of his day.

He was incapable of toying with the creatures of the fancy which had no relationship with himself and through himself with humanity.

A word as to Byron's hold upon the people. He was able to obtain a hearing from ordinary men and women, who knew nothing even of Shakespeare, save what they had seen at the theatre. Modern poetry is the luxury of a small cultivated class. We may say what we like of popularity, and if it be purchased by condescension to popular silliness it is nothing. But Byron secured access to thousands of readers in England and on the Continent by strength and loveliness, a feat seldom equalled and never perhaps surpassed. The present writer's father, a compositor in a dingy printing office, repeated verses from "Childe Harold" at the case. Still more remarkable, Byron reached one of this writer's friends, an officer in the Navy, of the ancient stamp; and the attraction, both to printer and lieutenant, lay in nothing lower than that which was best in him. It is surely a service sufficient to compensate for many more faults than can be charged against him that wherever there was any latent poetic dissatisfaction with the

vulgarity and meanness of ordinary life he gave it expression, and that he has awakened in the *people* lofty emotions which, without him, would have slept. The cultivated critics, and the refined persons who have *schrecklich viel gelesen*, are not competent to estimate the debt we owe to Byron.

BYRON, GOETHE, AND MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD

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MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD has lately published a remarkable essay[1] upon Lord Byron. Mr. Arnold's theory about Byron is, that he is neither artist nor thinker—that "he has no light, cannot lead us from the past to the future;" "the moment he reflects, he is a child;" "as a poet he has no fine and exact sense for word and structure and rhythm; he has not the artist's nature and gifts." The excellence of Byron mainly consists in his "sincerity and strength;" in his rhetorical power; in his "irreconcilable revolt and battle"

[1] *Poetry of Byron chosen and arranged by Matthew Arnold*—1881.

against the political and social order of things in which he lived. "Byron threw himself upon poetry as his organ; and in poetry his topics were not Queen Mab, and the Witch of the Atlas, and the Sensitive Plant, they were the upholdérs of the old order, George the Third and Lord Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington and Southey, and they were the canters and tramplers of the great world, and they were his enemies and himself."

Mr. Arnold appeals to Goethe as an authority in his favour. In order, therefore, that English people may know what Goethe thought about Byron I have collected some of the principal criticisms upon him which I can find in Goethe's works. The text upon which Mr. Arnold enlarges is the remark just quoted which Goethe made about Byron to Eckermann: "*so bald er reflectirt ist er ein Kind*"—*as soon as he reflects he is a child.*

Goethe, it is true, did say this; but the interpretation of the saying depends upon the context, which Mr. Arnold omits. I give the whole passage, quoting from Oxenford's translation of the *Eckermann Conversations*, vol. i. p. 198 (edition 1850):—

"'Lord Byron,' said Eckermann, 'is no wiser when he takes 'Faust' to pieces and thinks you found one thing here, the other there.' 'The greater part of those fine things cited by Lord Byron,' Goethe replied, 'I have never even read; much less did I think of them when I was writing "Faust." But Lord Byron is only great as a poet; as soon as he reflects he is a child. He knows not how to help himself against the stupid attacks of the same kind made upon him by his own countrymen. He ought to have expressed himself more strongly against them. 'What is there is mine,' he should have said, 'and whether I got it from a book or from life is of no consequence; the only point is, whether I have made a right use of it.' Walter Scott used a scene from my 'Egmont,' and he had a right to do so; and because he did it well, he deserves praise.'"

Goethe certainly does not mean that Byron was unable to reflect in the sense in which Mr. Arnold interprets the word. What was really meant we shall see in a moment.

We will, however, continue the quotations from the *Eckermann*:—

"We see how the inadequate dogmas of the

Church work upon a free mind like Byron's, and how by such a piece ('Cain') he struggles to get rid of a doctrine which has been forced upon him" (vol. i. p. 129).

"The world to him was transparent, and he could paint by way of anticipation" (vol. i. p. 140).

"That which I call invention I never saw in any one in the world to a greater degree than in him" (vol. i. p. 205).

"Lord Byron is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great talent. His good qualities belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable. All Englishmen are, as such, without reflection properly so-called; distractions and party-spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men. Thus, Lord Byron could never attain reflection on himself, and on this account his maxims in general are not successful. . . . But where he will create, he always succeeds; and we may truly say that, with him, inspiration supplies the place of reflection. He was always obliged to go on poetizing, and then everything that came from the man, especially

from his heart, was excellent. He produced his best things, as women do pretty children, without thinking about it, or knowing how it was done. He is a great talent, a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man than in him. In the apprehension of external objects, and a clear penetration into past situations, he is quite as great as Shakespeare. But as a pure individuality, Shakespeare is his superior" (vol. i. p. 209).

We see now what Goethe means by "reflection." It is the faculty of self-separation, or conscious *consideration*, a faculty which would have enabled Byron, as it enabled Goethe, to reply successfully to a charge of plagiarism. It is not thought in its widest sense, nor creation, and it has not much to do with the production of poems of the highest order—the poems, that is to say, which are written by the impersonal thought.

But again—

"The English may think of Byron as they please; but this is certain, that they can show no poet who is to be compared to him. He is different from all the others, and for the most part, greater" (vol. i. p. 290).

This passage is one which Mr. Arnold quotes, and he strives to diminish its importance by translating *der ihm zu vergleichen wäre*, by "who is his parallel," and maintains that Goethe "was not so much thinking of the strict rank, as poetry, of Byron's production; he was thinking of that wonderful personality of Byron which so enters into his poetry." It is just possible; but if Goethe did think this, he used words which are misleading, and if the phrase *der ihm zu vergleichen wäre* simply indicates parallelism, it has no point, for in that sense it might have been applied to Scott or to Southey.

"I have read once more Byron's 'Deformed Transformed,' and must say that to me his talent appears greater than ever. His devil was suggested by my Mephistopheles; but it is no imitation—it is thoroughly new and original; close, genuine, and spirited. There are no weak passages—not a place where you could put the head of a pin, where you do not find *invention and thought* [italics mine]. Were it not for his hypochondriacal negative turn, he would be as great as Shakespeare and the ancients" (vol. i. p. 294).

Eckermann expressed his surprise. "Yes," said Goethe, "you may believe me, I have studied him anew and am confirmed in this opinion." The position which Byron occupies in the Second Part of "Faust" is well known. Eckermann talked to Goethe about it, and Goethe said, "I could not make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century" (vol. i. p. 425). Mr. Arnold translates this word "genius" by "talent." The word in the original is *talent*, and I will not dispute with so accomplished a German scholar as Mr. Arnold as to what is the precise meaning of *talent*. In both the English translations of Eckermann the word is rendered "genius," and after the comparison between Byron, Shakespeare, and the ancients just quoted, we can hardly admit that Goethe meant to distinguish scientifically between the two orders of intellect and to assign the lower to Byron.

But, last of all, I will translate Goethe's criticism upon "Cain." So far as I know, it has not yet appeared in English. It is to be found in the Stuttgart and Tübingen edition of

Goethe, 1840, vol. xxxiii. p. 157. Some portions which are immaterial I have omitted :—

"After I had listened to the strangest things about this work for almost a year, I at last took it myself in hand, and it excited in me astonishment and admiration; an effect which will produce in the mind which is simply susceptible, everything good, beautiful, and great. . . . The poet who, surpassing the limit of all our conceptions, has penetrated with burning spiritual vision the past and present, and consequently the future, has now subdued new regions under his limitless talent, but what he will accomplish therein can be predicted by no human being. His procedure, however, we can nevertheless in a measure more closely determine. He adheres to the letter of the Biblical tradition, for he allows the first pair of human beings to exchange their original purity and innocence for a guilt mysterious in its origin; the punishment which is its consequence descending upon all posterity. The monstrous burden of such an event he lays upon the shoulders of Cain as the representative of a wretched humanity, plunged for no fault of its own into the depths of misery.

"To this primitive son of man, bowed down

and heavily burdened, death, which as yet he has not seen, is an especial trouble; and although he may desire the end of his present distress, it seems still more hateful to exchange it for a condition altogether unknown. Hence we already see that the full weight of a dogmatic system, explaining, mediating, yet always in conflict with itself, just as it still for ever occupies us, was imposed on the first miserable son of man. These contradictions, which are not strange to human nature, possessed his mind, and could not be brought to rest, either through the divinely-given gentleness of his father and brother, or the loving and alleviating co-operation of his sister-wife. In order to sharpen them to the point of impossibility of endurance, Satan comes upon the scene, a mighty and misleading spirit, who begins by unsettling him morally, and then conducts him miraculously through all worlds, causing him to see the past as overwhelmingly vast, the present as small and of no account, and the future as full of foreboding and void of consolation.

"So he turns back to his own family, more excited, but not worse than before; and finding

in the family circle everything as he has left it, the urgency of Abel, who wishes to make him offer a sacrifice, becomes altogether insupportable. More say we not, excepting that the motivation of the scene in which Abel perishes is of the rarest excellence, and what follows is equally great and priceless. There now lies Abel! That now is Death—there was so much talk about it, and man knows about it as little as he did before.

"We must not forget, that through the whole piece there runs a kind of presentiment of a Saviour, so that the poet at this point, as well as in all others, has known how to bring himself near to the ideas by which we explain things, and to our modes of faith.

"Of the scene with the parents, in which Eve at last curses the speechless Cain, which our western neighbour lifts into such striking prominence, there remains nothing more for us to say: we have to approach the conclusion with astonishment and reverence.

"With regard to this conclusion, an intelligent and fair friend, related to us through esteem for Byron, has asserted that everything

religious and moral in the world was put into the last three words of the piece." [1]

We have now heard enough from Goethe to prove that Mr. Arnold's interpretation of "*so bald er reflectirt ist er ein Kind*" is not Goethe's interpretation of Byron. It is to be remembered that Goethe was not a youth overcome by Mr. Arnold's "vogue" when he read Byron. He was a singularly self-possessed old man.

Many persons will be inclined to think that Goethe, so far from putting Byron on a lower level than that usually assigned to him, has over-praised him, and will question the "burning spiritual vision" which the great German believed the great Englishman to possess. But if we consider what Goethe calls the "motivation" of Cain; if we reflect on what the poet has put into the legend; on the exploration of the universe with Lucifer as a guide; on its result, on the mode in which the death of Abel is reached; on the doom of the murderer—the limitless wilderness henceforth and no rest; on the fidelity of Adah, who, with the true instinct

[1] "*Adah.*—Peace be with him (Abel).
Cain.—But with *me!*"

of love, separates between the man and the crime; on the majesty of the principal character, who stands before us as the representative of the insurgence of the human intellect, so that, if we know him, we know a whole literature; if we meditate hereon, we shall say that Goethe has not exaggerated. It is the same with the rest of Byron's dramas. Over and above the beauty of detached passages, there is in each one of them a large and universal meaning, or rather meaning within meaning, precisely the same for no reader, but none the less certain, and as inexhaustible as the meanings of Nature. This is one reason why the wisdom of a selection from Byron is so doubtful. The worth of "Cain," of "Sardanapalus," of "Manfred," of "Marino Faliero," is the worth of an outlook over the sea; and we cannot take a sample of the scene from a cliff by putting a pint of water into a bottle. But Byron's critics and the compilers tell us of failures, which ought not to survive, and that we are doing a kindness to him if we suppress these and exhibit him at his best. No man who seriously cares for Byron will assent to this doctrine. We want to know the whole of him, his weakness as well as his

strength; for the one is not intelligible without the other. A human being is an indivisible unity, and his weakness *is* his strength, and his strength *is* his weakness.

It is not my object now, however, to justify what Mr. Arnold calls the Byronic "superstition." I hope I could justify a good part of it, but this is not the opportunity. I cannot resist, however, saying a word by way of conclusion on the manner in which Byron has fulfilled what seems to me one of the chief offices of the poet. Mr. Arnold, although he is so dissatisfied with Byron because he "cannot reflect," would probably in another mood admit that "reflections" are not what we demand of a poet. We do not ask of him a rhymed book of proverbs. He should rather be the articulation of what in Nature is great but inarticulate. In him the thunder, the sea, the peace of morning, the joy of youth, the rush of passion, the calm of old age, should find words, and men should through him become aware of the unrecognised wealth of existence. Byron had the power above most poets of acting as a kind of tongue to Nature. His descriptions are on everybody's lips, and it is superfluous to quote

them. He represented things not as if they were aloof from him, but as if they were the concrete embodiment of his soul. The woods, the wilds, the waters of Nature are to him—

> "the intense
> Reply of *hers* to our intelligence."

His success is equally marked when he portrays men or women whose character attracts him. Take, for example, the girl in "The Island":—

> "The sunborn blood suffused her neck, and threw
> O'er her clear nutbrown skin a lucid hue,
> Like coral reddening through the darken'd wave,
> Which draws the diver to the crimson cave.
> Such was this daughter of the southern seas,
> *Herself a billow in her energies.*
>
> * * * * *
>
> Her smiles and tears had pass'd, as light winds pass
> O'er lakes to ruffle, not destroy, their glass,
> *Whose depths unsearch'd, and fountains from the hill,*
> *Restore their surface, in itself so still.*"

Passages like these might be quoted without end from Byron, and they explain why he is and must be amongst the immortals. He may have been careless in expression; he may have been a barbarian and not a εὐφυής, as Mr.

Matthew Arnold affirms, but he was *great.* This is the word which describes him. He was a mass of living energy, and therefore he is sanative. Energy, power, is the one thing after which we pine in this sickly age. We do not want carefully and consciously constructed poems of mosaic. Strength is what we need and what will heal us. Strength is true morality, and true beauty. It is the strength in Byron that falsifies the accusation of affectation and posing, which is brought against him. All that is meant by affectation and posing was a mere surface trick. The real man, Byron, and his poems are perfectly unconscious, as unconscious as the wind. The books which have lived and always will live have this unconsciousness in them, and what is manufactured, self-centred, and self-contemplative will perish. The world's literature is the work of men, who, to use Byron's own words—

"Strip off this fond and false identity;"

who are lost in their object, who write because they cannot help it, imperfectly or perfectly, as the case may be, and who do not sit down to fit in this thing and that thing from a common-

place book. Many novelists there are who know their art better than Charlotte Brontë, but she, like Byron—and there are more points of resemblance between them than might at first be supposed—is imperishable because she speaks under overwhelming pressure, self-annihilated, we may say, while the spirit breathes through her. The Byron "vogue" will never pass so long as men and women are men and women. Mr. Arnold and the critics may remind us of his imperfections of form, but Goethe is right after all, for not since Shakespeare have we had any one *der ihm zu vergleichen wäre.*

A SACRIFICE

A FATAL plague devastated the city. The god had said that it would continue to rage until atonement for a crime had been offered by the sacrifice of a man. He was to be perfect in body; he must not desire to die because he no longer loved life, or because he wished for fame. A statue must not be erected to his memory; no poem must be composed for him; his name must not appear in the city's records.

A few volunteers presented themselves, but none of them satisfied all the conditions. At last a young man came who had served as the model for the image of the god in his temple. There was no question, therefore, of soundness of limb, and when he underwent the form of examination no spot nor blemish was found on

him. The priest asked him whether he was in trouble, and especially whether he was disappointed in love. He said he was in no trouble; that he was betrothed to a girl to whom he was devoted, and that they had intended to be married that month. "I am," he declared, "the happiest man in the city." The priest doubted and watched him that evening, but he saw him walking side by side with this girl, and the two were joyous as a youth and a maiden ought to be in the height of their passion. She sat down and sang to him; he played to her, and they embraced one another tenderly at parting.

The next morning was the day on which he was to be slain. There was an altar in front of the temple, and a great crowd assembled, ranked round the open space. At the appointed hour the priest appeared, and with him was the youth, holding his beloved by the hand, but she was blindfolded. He let go her hand, knelt down, and in a moment the sacrificial knife was drawn across his throat. His body was placed upon the wood, and the priest was about to kindle it when a flash from heaven struck it into a blaze with such heat that when

the fire dropped no trace of the victim remained. The girl, too, had disappeared, and was never seen again.

In accordance with the god's decree, no statue was erected, no poem was composed, and no entry was made in the city records. But tradition did not forget that the sa 'our of the city was he who survived in the great image on which the name of the god was inscribed.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

THE AGED TREE

AN aged tree, whose companions had gone, having still a little sap in its bark and a few leaves which grew therefrom, prayed it might see yet another spring. Its prayer was granted: and spring came, but the old tree had no leaves save one or two near the ground, and a great fungus fixed itself on its trunk. It had a dull life in its roots, but not enough to know that its moss and fungus were not foliage. It stood there, an unlovely mass of decay, when the young trees were all bursting. "That rotten thing," said the master, "ought to have been cut down long ago."

CONSCIENCE

"CONSCIENCE," said I, "her conscience would have told her."

"Yes," said my father. "The strongest amongst the many objections to the Roman Catholic doctrine of confession is that it weakens our dependence on the conscience. If we seek for an external command to do what ought to be done in obedience to that inward monitor, whose voice is always clear if we will but listen, its authority will gradually be lost, and in the end it will cease to speak."

"Conscience," said my grandmother musingly (turning to my father). "You will remember Phyllis Eyre? She was one of my best friends, and it is now two years since she died, unmarried. She was once governess to the children of Sir Robert Walsh, but remained in the house as companion to Lady Walsh long

after her pupils had grown up. She was, in fact, more than a companion, for Lady Walsh trusted her and loved her. She was by birth a lady; she had been well educated, and, like her mistress, she was devoutly and evangelically pious. She was also very handsome, and this you may well believe, for, as you know, she was handsome as an old woman, stately and erect, with beautiful, undimmed eyes. When Evelina Walsh, the eldest daughter, was about one and twenty, Charles Fysshe, the young heir to the Fysshe property, came to stay with her brother, and Phyllis soon discovered, or thought she discovered, that he was in love with Evelina. He seemed to court her society, and paid her attentions which could be explained on one hypothesis only. Phyllis was delighted, for the match in every way was most suitable, and must gladden the hearts of Evelina's parents. The young man would one day be the possessor of twenty thousand acres; he had already taken a position in the county, and his soul was believed to be touched with Divine grace. Evelina certainly was in love with him, and Phyllis was not backward in urging his claims. She congratulated herself, and with

justice, that if the marriage should ever take place, it would be acknowledged that she had had a hand in it. It might even be doubted whether Evelina, without Phyllis's approval, would have permitted herself to indulge her passion, for she was by nature diffident, and so beset with reasons for and against when she had to make up her mind on any important matter, that a decision was always most difficult to her.

"Charles stayed for about six weeks, and was then called home. He promised that he would pay another visit of a week in the autumn, when Sir Robert was to entertain the Lord Lieutenant and there were to be grand doings at the Hall. Conversation naturally turned upon him during his absence, and Phyllis, as usual, was warm in his praise. One evening, after she had reached her own room and had lain down to sleep, a strange apparition surprised her. It was something more than a suspicion that she herself loved Charles. She strove to rid herself of this intrusion: she called to mind the difference in their rank; that she was five years his senior, and that if she yielded she would be guilty of treachery to Evelina. It was all in vain; the

more she resisted the more vividly did his image present itself, and she was greatly distressed. What was the meaning of this outbreak of emotion, not altogether spiritual, of this loss of self-possession, such as she had never known before? Her usual remedies against evil thoughts failed her, and, worst of all, there was the constant suggestion that these particular thoughts were not evil. Hitherto, when temptation had attacked her, she was sure whence it came, but she was not sure now. It might be an interposition of Providence, but how would it appear to Evelina? I myself, my dears, have generally found that to resist the devil is not difficult if I am quite certain that the creature before me is the devil, but it does tax my wits sometimes to find out if he is really the enemy or not. When Apollyon met Christian he was not in doubt for an instant, for the monster was hideous to behold: he had scales like a fish, wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. After some parleying he cast his dreadful dart, but Christian, without more ado, put up his shield, drew his sword, and presently triumphed. If

Satan had turned himself, from his head to his ankles, into a man, and had walked by Christian's side, and had talked with him, and had agreed with him in everything he had to say, the bear's claws might have peeped out, but Christian, instead of fighting, would have begun to argue with himself whether the evidence of the face or the foot was the stronger. He would have been just as likely to trust the face, and in a few moments he would have been snapped up and carried off to hell. To go on with my story: the night wore on in sophistry and struggle, and no inner light dawned with the sun. Phyllis was much agitated, for in the afternoon Charles was to return, and although amidst the crowd of visitors she might be overlooked, she could not help seeing him. She did see him, but did not speak to him. He sat next to Evelina at dinner, who was happy and expectant. The next day there was a grand meet of the hounds, and almost all the party disappeared. Phyllis pleaded a headache, and obtained permission to stay at home. It was a lovely morning in November, without a movement in the air, calm and cloudless, one of those mornings not uncommon

when the year begins to die. She went into the woods at the outer edge of the park, and had scarcely entered them, when lo! to her astonishment, there was Charles. She could not avoid him, and he came up to her.

"'Why, Miss Eyre, what are you doing here?'

"'I had a headache; I could not go with the others, and came out for a stroll.'

"'I, too, was not very well, and have been left behind.'

"They walked together side by side.

"'I wanted to speak to you, Miss Eyre. I wonder if you have suspected anything lately.'

"'Suspected? I do not quite comprehend: you are very vague.'

"'Well, must I be more explicit? Have you fancied that I care more for somebody you know than I care for all the world besides? I suppose you have not, for I thought it better to hide as much as possible what I felt.'

"'I should be telling an untruth if I were to say I do not understand you, and I trust you will pardon me if I tell you that a girl more worthy of you than Evelina, and one more likely to make you happy, I have never seen.'

"'Gracious God! what have I done? what a mistake! Miss Eyre, it is you I mean; it is you I love.'

"There was not an instant's hesitation.

"'Sir, I thank you, but I can answer at once. *Never* can I be yours. That decision is irrevocable. I admire you, but cannot love you.'

"She parted from him abruptly, but no sooner had she left him than she was confounded, and wondered who or what it was which gave that answer. She wavered, and thought of going back, but she did not. Later on in the day she heard that Charles had gone home, summoned by sudden business. Two years afterwards his engagement with Evelina was announced, and in three years they were married. It was not what I should call a happy marriage, although they never quarrelled and had five children. To the day of her death Phyllis was not sure whether she had done right or wrong, nor am I."

THE GOVERNESS'S STORY

IN the year 1850 I was living as governess in the small watering-place S., on the south coast of England. Amongst my friends was a young doctor, B., who had recently come to the town. He had not bought a practice, but his family was known to one or two of the principal inhabitants, and he had begun to do well. He deserved his success, for he was skilful, frank, and gentle, and he did not affect that mystery which in his elder colleagues was already suspected to be nothing but ignorance. He was one of the early graduates of the University of London, and representative of the new school of medical science, relying not so much upon drugs as upon diet and regimen. I was one of his first patients. I had a severe illness lasting for nearly three months; he watched over me

carefully and cured me. As I grew better he began to talk on other matters than my health when he visited me. We found that we were both interested in the same books: he lent me his and I lent him mine. It is almost impossible, I should think, for a young man and a young woman to be friends and nothing more, and I confess that my sympathy with him in his admiration of the Elizabethan poets, and my gratitude to him for my recovery passed into affection. I am sure also that he felt affection for me. He became confidential, and told me all his history and troubles. There was one peculiarity in his conversation which was new to me: he never talked down to me, and he was not afraid at times to discuss subjects that in the society to which I had been accustomed were prohibited. Not a word that was improper ever escaped his lips, but he treated me in a measure as if I were a man, and I was flattered that he should put me on a level with himself. It is true that sometimes I fancied he was so unreserved with me because he was sure he was quite safe, for I was poor, and although I was not ugly I was not handsome. However, on the whole, I was very happy in his society,

and there was more than a chance that I should become his wife.

After six months of our acquaintanceship had passed, M., an old schoolfellow of mine, took lodgings near me for the summer. She was a remarkable girl. If she was not beautiful, she was better-looking than I was, and she possessed a something, I know not what, more powerful than beauty to fascinate men. Perhaps it was her unconstrained naturalness. In walking, sitting, standing—whatever she did—her movements and attitudes were not impeded or unduly masked by artificial restrictions. I should not have called her profound, but what she said upon the commonest subjects was interesting, because it was so entirely her own. If she disliked a neighbour, she almost always disliked her for a reason which we saw, directly it was pointed out to us, to be just, but it was generally one which had not been given before. Her talk upon matters externally trivial was thus much more to me than many discourses upon the most important topics. On moral questions she expressed herself without any regard to prejudices. She did not controvert the authenticity of the ordinary standards,

but nevertheless behaved as if she herself were her only law. The people in R., her little native borough, considered her to be dangerous, and I myself was once or twice weak enough to wonder that she held on a straight course with so little help from authority, forgetting that its support, in so far as it possesses any vital strength, is derived from the same internal source which supplied strength to her.

When she came to S. she was unwell, and consulted my friend B. He did not at first quite like attending her, and she reported to me with great laughter how she had been told that he had made some inquiries about her from one of her neighbours at home with whom he happened to be acquainted, and how he had manœuvred in his visits to get the servants or the landlady into the room. I met him soon afterwards, and he informed me that he had a new patient. When he heard that I knew her —I did not say how much I knew—he became inquisitive, and at last, after much beating about the bush, knitting his eyebrows and lowering his voice, he asked me whether I was aware that she was not quite—quite *above suspicion!* My goodness, how I flamed up! I defended

her with vehemence: I exaggerated her prudence and her modesty; I declared, what was the simple truth, that she was the last person in the world against whom such a scandalous insinuation should be directed, and that she was singularly inaccessible to vulgar temptation. I added that notwithstanding her seeming lawlessness she was not only remarkably sensitive to any accusation of bad manners, but that upon certain matters she could not endure even a joke. The only quarrel I remember to have had with her was when I lapsed into some commonplace jest about her intimacy with a music-master who gave her lessons. The way in which she took that jest I shall never forget. If I had made it to any other woman, I should have passed on, unconscious of anything inconsistent with myself, but she in an instant made me aware with hardly half a dozen words that I had disgraced myself. I was ashamed, not so much because I had done what was in the abstract wrong, but because it was something which was not in keeping with my real character. I hope it will not be thought that I am prosing if I take this opportunity of saying that the laws peculiar to each of us are those which we

are at the least pains to discover and those which we are most prone to neglect. We think we have done our duty when we have kept the commandments common to all of us, but we may perhaps have disgracefully neglected it.

Oh, how that afternoon with B. burnt itself into my memory for ever! I was sitting on my little sofa with books piled round me. He removed a few of the books, and I removed the others. He sat down beside me, and, taking my hand, said he hoped I had forgiven him, and that I would remember that in such a little place he was obliged to be very careful, and to be quite sure of his patients, if they were women. He trusted I should believe that there was no other person *in the world* (the emphasis on that word!) to whom he would have ventured to impart such a secret. I was appeased, especially when, after a few minutes' silence, he took my hand and kissed it, the first and last kiss. He said nothing further, and departed. The next time I saw him he was more than usually deferential, more than ever desirous to come closer to me, and I thought the final word must soon be spoken.

M. remained in S. till far into the autumn,

but I did not see much of her. My work had begun again. B. continued to call on me as my health was not quite re-established. We had agreed to read the same author at the same time, in order that we might discuss him together whilst our impressions were still fresh. Somehow his interest in these readings began to flag; he informed me presently that I had now almost, entirely recovered, and weeks often passed without meeting him. One afternoon I was surprised to find M. in my room when I returned from a walk with my pupils. She had been waiting for me nearly half an hour, and I could not at first conjecture the reason. Gradually she drew the conversation towards B. and at last asked me what I thought of him. Instantly I saw what had happened. What I imagined was once mine had been stolen, stolen perhaps unconsciously, but nevertheless stolen, my sole treasure. She was rich, she had a father and mother, she had many friends and would certainly have been married had she never seen B. I, as I have said, was almost penniless; I was an orphan, with few friends; he was my first love, and I knew he would be my last.

I was condemned, I foresaw, henceforth to solitude, and that most terrible of all calamities, heart-starvation. What B. had said about M. came into my mind and rose to my lips. I knew, or thought I knew, that if I revealed it to her she would be so angry that she would cast him off. Probably I was mistaken, but in my despair the impulse to disclose it was almost irresistible. I struggled against it, however, and when she pressed me, I praised him and strove in my praise to be sincere. Whether it was something in my tone, quite unintentional, I know not, but she stopped me almost in the middle of a sentence and said she believed I had kept something back which I did not wish her to hear; that she was certain he had talked to me about her, and that she wished to know what he had said. I protested he had never uttered a word which could be interpreted as disparaging her, and she seemed to be content. She kissed me a little more vehemently than usual, and went away. We ought always, I suppose, to be glad when other people are happy, but God knows that sometimes it is very difficult to be so, and that their happiness is hard to bear.

The Elizabethan studies had now altogether come to an end. In about a couple of months I heard that M. and B. were engaged. M. went home, and B. moved into a larger town. In a twelvemonth the marriage took place, and M. wrote to me after her wedding trip. I replied, but she never wrote again. I heard that she had said that I had laid myself out to catch B. and that she was afraid that in so doing I had hinted there was something against her. I heard also that B. had discouraged his wife's correspondence with me, no other reason being given than that he would rather the acquaintanceship should be dropped. The interpretation of this reason by those to whom it was given can be guessed. Did he fear lest I should boast of what I had been to him or should repeat his calumny? Ah, he little knew me if he dreamed that such treachery was possible to me!

I remained at the vicarage for three years. The children grew up and I was obliged to leave, but I continued to teach in different families till I was about five-and-forty. After five-and-forty I could not obtain another situation, and I had to support myself by

letting apartments at Brighton. My strength is now failing; I cannot look after my servant properly, nor wait upon my lodgers myself. Those who have to get their living by a lodging-house know what this means and what the end will be. I have occasionally again wished I could have seen my way partially to explain myself to M., and have thought it hard to die misrepresented, but I am glad I have not spoken. I should have disturbed her peace, and I care nothing about justification or misrepresentation now. With eternity so near, what does it matter?

INSCRIPTION ON THE ENVELOPE.

"TO MY NIECE JUDITH,—You have been so kind to your aunt, the only human being, at last, who was left to love her, that she could not refrain from telling you the one passage in her history which is of any importance or interest."

JAMES FORBES

"IT is all a lie, and it is hard to believe that the people who preach it do not know it to be a lie."

So said James Forbes to Elizabeth Castleton, the young woman to whom he was engaged. She was the daughter of a clergyman, and James, who had been brought up at Rugby and Oxford, was now in his last year at a London hospital, and was going to be a doctor.

"I am sure my father does not know it to be a lie, and I do not myself know it to be a lie."

"I was not thinking of your father, but of the clergy generally, and you *do* know it to be a lie."

"It is not true of my brother, and, excepting my father and brother, you have not been in

company with parsons, as you call them, for half an hour in your life."

"Do you mean to tell me you have any doubts about this discredited rubbish?"

"If I have I would rather not speak about them now. Jim, dear Jim, let us drop the subject and talk of something else."

He was walking by her side, with his hands in his coat pockets. She drew out one of his hands; he did not return the pressure, and presently released himself.

"I thought you were to be my intellectual companion. I have heard you say yourself that a marriage which is not a marriage of mind is no marriage."

"But, Jim, is there nothing in the world to think about but this?"

"There is nothing so important. Are we to be dumb all our lives about what you say is religion?"

They separated and soon afterwards the engagement was broken off. Jim had really loved Elizabeth, but at that time he was furious against what he called "creeds." He waited for three or four years till he had secured a fair practice, and then married a clever and hand-

some young woman who wrote poems, and had captivated him by telling him a witty story from Heine. Elizabeth never married.

Thirty years passed, and Jim, now a famous physician, had to go a long distance down the Great Western Railway to attend a consultation. At Bath an elderly lady entered the carriage carrying a handbag with the initials "E. C." upon it. She sat in the seat farthest away from him on the opposite side, and looked at him steadfastly. He also looked at her, but no word was spoken for a minute. He then crossed over, fell on his knees, and buried his head with passionate sobbing on her knees. She put her hands on him and her tears fell.

"Five years," at last he said; "I may live five years with care. She has left me. I will give up everything and go abroad with you. Five years; it is not much, but it will be something, everything. I shall die with your face over me."

The train was slackening speed for Bristol; she bent down and kissed him.

"Dearest Jim," she whispered, "I have waited a long time, but I was sure we should come together again at last. It is enough."

"You will go with me, then?"

Again she kissed him. "It must not be."

Before he could reply the train was stopping at the platform, and a gentleman with a lady appeared at the door. Miss Castleton stepped out and was at once driven away in a carriage with her companions.

He lived three years and then died almost suddenly of the disease which he had foreseen would kill him. He had no children, but few relatives, and his attendant was a hospital nurse. But the day before his death a lady appeared who announced herself as a family friend, and the nurse was superseded. It was Elizabeth: she came to his bedside, and he recognised her.

"Not till this morning," she said, "did I hear you were ill."

"Happy," he cried, "though I die to-night."

Soon afterwards—it was about sundown—he became unconscious; she sat there alone with him till the morning broke, and then he passed away, and she closed his eyes.

ATONEMENT

"YOU ask me how I lost my foot? You see that dog?"—an unattractive beast lying before the fire—"well, when I tell you how I came by him you will know how I lost it;" and he then related the following story:—

I was in Westmoreland with my wife and children for a holiday and we had brought our dog with us, for we knew he would be unhappy with the strangers to whom we had let our house. The weather was very wet and our lodgings were not comfortable; we were kept indoors for days together, and my temper, always irritable, became worse. My wife never resisted me when I was in these moods and the absence of opposition provoked me all the more.

Had she stood up against me and told me I ought to be ashamed of myself it would have been better for me. One afternoon everything seemed to go wrong. A score of petty vexations, not one of which was of any moment, worked me up to desperation. I threw my book across the room, to the astonishment of my children, and determined to go out, although it was raining hard. My dog, a brown retriever, was lying on the mat just outside the door, and I nearly fell over him. "God damn you!" said I, and kicked him. He howled with pain, but, although he was the best of house-dogs and would have brought down any thief who came near him, he did not growl at me, and quietly followed me. I am not squeamish, but I was frightened directly the oath had escaped my lips. I felt as if I had created something horrible which I could not annihilate, and that it would wait for me and do me some mischief. The dog kept closely to my heels for about a mile and I could not make him go on in front. Usually the least word of encouragement or even the mere mention of his name would send him scampering with delight in advance. I began to think of something else, but in about

a quarter of an hour I looked round and found he was not behind me. I whistled and called, but he did not come. In a renewed rage, which increased with every step I took, I turned back to seek him. Suddenly I came upon him lying dead by the roadside. Never shall I forget that shock—the reproach, the appeal of that poor lifeless animal! I stroked him, I kissed him, I whispered his name in his ear, but it was all in vain. I lifted up his beautiful broad paw which he was wont to lay on my knee, I held it between my hands, and when I let it go it fell heavily to the ground. I could not carry him home, and with bitter tears and a kind of dread I drew him aside a little way up the hill behind a rock. I went to my lodgings, returned towards dusk with a spade, dug his grave in a lonely spot near the bottom of a waterfall where he would never be disturbed, and there I buried him, reverently smoothing the turf over him. What a night that was for *me*! I was haunted incessantly by the vivid image of the dead body and by the terror which accompanies a great crime. I had repaid all his devotion with horrible cruelty. I had repented, but he would never

know it. It was not the dog only which I had slain; I had slain Divine faithfulness and love. That *God damn you* sounded perpetually in my ears. The Almighty had registered and executed the curse, but it had fallen upon the murderer and not on the victim. When I rose in the morning I distinctly felt the blow of the kick in my foot, and the sensation lasted all day. For weeks I was in a miserable condition. A separate consciousness seemed to establish itself in this foot; there was nothing to be seen and no pain, but there was a dull sort of pressure of which I could not rid myself. If I slept I dreamed of the dog, and generally dreamed I was caressing him, waking up to the dreadful truth of the corpse on the path in the rain. I got it into my head—for I was half-crazy—that only by some expiation I should be restored to health and peace; but how to make any expiation I could not tell. Unhappy is the wretch who longs to atone for a sin and no atonement is prescribed to him!

One night I was coming home late and heard the cry of "Fire!" I ran down the street and found a house in flames. The fire-escape was

at the window, and had rescued a man, his wife and child. Every living creature was safe, I was told, save a dog in the front room on the ground-floor. I pushed the people aside, rushed in, half-blinded with smoke, and found him. I could not escape by the passage, and dropped out of the window into the area with him in my arms. I fell heavily on *that* foot, and when I was helped up the steps I could not put it to the ground. "You may have him for your pains," said his owner to me; "he is a useless cur. I wouldn't have ventured the singeing of a hair for him." "May I?" I replied, with an eagerness which must have seemed very strange. He was indeed not worth half a crown, but I drew him closely to me and took him into the cab. I was in great agony, and when the surgeon came it was discovered that my ankle was badly fractured. An attempt was made to set it, but in the end it was decided that the foot must be amputated. I rejoiced when I heard the news, and on the day on which the operation was performed I was calm and even cheerful. Our own doctor who came with the surgeon told him I had "a highly nervous temperament," and both of them

were amazed at my fortitude. The dog is a mongrel, as you see, but he loves me, and if you were to offer me ten thousand golden guineas I would not part with him.

LETTERS FROM MY AUNT ELEANOR[1] *TO HER DAUGHTER SOPHIA, AND A FRAGMENT FROM MY AUNT'S DIARY.*

January 31, 1837.

MY DEAREST CHILD,—It is now a month since your father died. It was a sore trial to me that you should have broken down, and that you could not be here when he was laid in his grave, but I would not for worlds have allowed you to make the journey. I am glad I forced

[1] My aunt Eleanor was thought to be a bit of a pagan by the evangelical part of our family. My mother when speaking of her to me used to say, "Your heathen aunt." She was well-educated, but the better part of her education she received abroad after her engagement, which took place when she was eighteen years old. She was the only member of our family in the upper middle class. Her husband was Thomas Charteris, junior partner in a bank.

you away. The doctor said he would not answer for the consequences unless you were removed. But I must not talk, not even to you. I will write again soon.

Your most affectionate mother,

ELEANOR CHARTERIS.

February 5, 1837.

I have been alone in the library from morning to night every day. How foolish all the books look! There is nothing in them which can do me any good. He is *not*: what is there which can alter that fact? Had he died later I could have borne it better. I am only fifty years old, and may have long to wait. I always knew I loved him devotedly; now I see how much I depended on him. I had become so knit up with him that I imagined his strength to be mine. His support was so continuous and so soft that I was unconscious of it. How clear-headed and resolute he was in difficulty and danger! You do not remember the great fire? We were waked up out of our sleep; the flames spread rapidly; a mob filled the street, shouting and breaking open doors. The man in charge of the engines lost his head, but your

father was perfectly cool. He got on horseback, directed two or three friends to do the same; they galloped into the town and drove the crowd away. He controlled all the operations and saved many lives and many thousands of pounds. Is there any happiness in the world like that of the woman who hangs on such a husband?

February 10, 1837.

I feel as if my heart would break if I do not see you, but I cannot come to your Aunt's house just now. She is very kind, but she would be unbearable to me. Have patience: the sea air is doing you good; you will soon be able to walk, and then you can return. O, to feel your head upon my neck! I have many friends, but I have always needed a human being to whom I was everything. To your father I believe I was everything, and that thought was perpetual heaven to me. My love for him did not make me neglect other people. On the contrary, it gave them their proper value. Without it I should have put them by. When a man is dying for want of water he cares for nothing around him. Satisfy his thirst, and he can

then enjoy other pleasures. I was his first love, he was my first, and we were lovers to the end. I know the world would be dark to you also were I to leave it. Perhaps it is wicked of me to rejoice that you would suffer so keenly. I cannot tell how much of me is pure love and how much of me is selfishness. I remember my uncle's death. For ten days or so afterwards everybody in the house looked solemn, and occasionally there was a tear, but at the end of a fortnight there was smiling and at the end of a month there was laughter. I was but a child then, but I thought much about the ease and speed with which the gap left by death was closed.

February 20, 1837.

In a fortnight you will be here? The doctor really believes you will be able to travel? I am glad you can get out and taste the sea air. I count the hours which must pass till I see you. A short week, and then—"the day after to-morrow, and the day after to-morrow of that day," and so I shall be able to reach forward to the Monday. It is strange that the nearer Monday comes the more impatient I am.

March 3, 1837.

With what sickening fear I opened your letter! I was sure it contained some dreadful news. You have decided not to come till Wednesday, because your cousin Tom can accompany you on that day. I *know* you are quite right. It is so much better, as you are not strong, that Tom should look after you, and it would be absurd that you should make the journey two days before him. I should have reproved you seriously if you had done anything so foolish. But those two days are hard to bear. I shall not meet you at the coach, nor shall I be downstairs. Go straight to the library; I shall be there by myself.

DIARY.

January 1, 1838.—Three days ago she died. Henceforth there is no living creature to whom my existence is of any real importance. Crippled as she was, she could never have married. I might have held her as long as she lived. She could have expected no love but mine. God forgive me! Perhaps I did unconsciously rejoice in that disabled limb because it kept her closer to me. Now He has taken her

from me. I may have been wicked, but has He no mercy? "I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God." An answer in anger could better be borne than this impregnable silence.

January 3rd.—A day of snow and bitter wind. There were very few at the grave, and I should have been better pleased if there had been none. What claim had they to be there? I have come home alone, and they no doubt are comforting themselves with the reflection that it is all over except the half-mourning. Her death makes me hate them. Mr. Maxwell, our rector, told me when my child was ill to remember that I had no right to her. "Right!" what did he mean by that stupid word? How trouble tries words! All I can say is that from her birth I had owned her, and that now, when I want her most, I am dispossessed. "Self, self"—I know the reply, but it is unjust, for I would have stood up cheerfully to be shot if I could have saved her pain. Doubly unjust, for my passion for her was a blessing to her as well as to me.

January 6th.—Henceforth I suppose I shall

have to play with people, to pretend to take an interest in their clothes and their parties, or, with the superior sort, to discuss politics or books. I care nothing for their rags or their gossip, for Lord Melbourne, Sir Robert Peel, or Mr. James Montgomery. I must learn how to take the tip of a finger instead of a hand, and to accept with gratitude comfits when I hunger for bread—I, who have known—but I dare say nothing even to myself of my hours with him—I, who have heard Sophy cry out in the night for me; I, who have held her hand and have prayed by her bedside.

January 10th.—I must be still. I have learned this lesson before—that speech even to myself does harm. If I admit no conversation nor debate with myself, I certainly will not admit the chatter of outsiders. Mr. Maxwell called again to-day. "Not a syllable on that subject," said I when he began in the usual strain. He then suggested that as this house was too large for me, and must have what he called "melancholy associations," I should move. He had suggested this before, when my husband died. How can I leave the home to which I was

brought as a bride? how can I endure the thought that strangers are in our room, or in that other room where Sophy lay? Mr. Maxwell would think it sacrilege to turn his church into an inn, and it is a worse sacrilege to me to permit the profanation of the sanctuary which has been consecrated by Love and Death. I do not know what might happen to me if I were to leave. I have been what I am through shadowy nothings which other people despise. To me they are realities and a law. I shall stay where I am. "A villa," forsooth, on the outskirts of the town! My existence would be fractured: it will at least preserve its continuity here. Across the square I can see the house in which I was born, and I can watch the shadow of the church in the afternoon slowly crossing the churchyard. The townsfolk stand in the street and go up and down it just as they did forty years ago—not the same persons, but in a sense the same people. My brother will call me extravagant if I remain here. He buys a horse and does not consider it extravagant, and my money is not wasted if I spend it in the only way in which it is of any value to me.

January 12th.—I had thought I could be dumb, but I cannot. My sorrow comes in rushes. I lift up my head above the waves for an instant, and immediately I am overwhelmed—"all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." My nights are a terror to me, and I fear for my reason. That last grip of Sophy's hand is distinctly on mine now, palpable as the pressure of a fleshly hand could be. It is strange that without any external circumstances to account for it, she and I often thought the same things at the same moment. She seemed to know instinctively what was passing in my mind, so that I was afraid to harbour any unworthy thought, feeling sure that she would detect it. Blood of my blood was she. She said "goodbye" to me with perfect clearness, and in a quarter of an hour she had gone. In that quarter of an hour there could not be the extinction of so much. Such a creature as Sophy could not instantaneously *not be.* I cannot believe it, but still the volume of my life here is closed, the story is at an end; what remains will be nothing but a few notes on what has gone before.

January 21st.—I went to church to-day for the first time since the funeral. Mr. Maxwell preached a dull, doctrinal sermon. Whilst my husband and Sophy lived, I was a regular attendant at church, and never thought of disputing anything I heard. It did not make much impression on me, but I accepted it, and if I had been asked whether I believed it, I should have said, "Certainly." But now a new standard of belief has been set up in me, and the word "belief" has a different meaning.

February 3rd.—Whenever I saw anything beautiful I always asked Tom or Sophy to look. Now I ask nobody. Early this morning, after the storm in the night, the sky cleared, and I went out about dawn through the garden up to the top of the orchard and watched the disappearance of the night in the west. The loveliness of that silent conquest was unsurpassable. Eighteen months ago I should have run indoors and have dragged Tom and Sophy back with me. I saw it alone now, and although the promise in the slow transformation of darkness to azure moved me to tears, I felt it was no promise for me.

March 1st.—Nothing that is *prescribed* does me any good. I cannot leave off going to church, but the support I want I must find out for myself. Perhaps if I had been born two hundred years ago, I might have been caught by some strong enthusiastic organisation and have been a private in a great army. A miserable time is this when each man has to grope his way unassisted, and all the incalculable toil of founders of churches goes for little or nothing. . . . I do not pray for any more pleasure: I ask only for strength to endure, till I can lie down and rest. I have had more rapture in a day than my neighbours and relations have had in all their lives. Tom once said to me that he would sooner have had twenty-four hours with me as his wife than youth and manhood with any other woman he ever knew. He said that, not when we were first married, but a score of years afterwards. I remember the place and the hour. It was in the garden one morning in July, just before breakfast. It was a burning day, and massive white clouds were forming themselves on the horizon. The storm on that day was the heaviest I recollect, and the lightning struck

one of our chimneys and dashed it through the roof. His passion was informed with intellect, and his intellect glowed with passion. There was nothing in him merely animal or merely rational. . . . To endure, to endure! Can there be any endurance without a motive? I have no motive.

March 10th.—My sister and my brother-in-law came to-day and I wished them away. Now that my husband is dead I discover that the frequent visitors to our house came to see him and not me. There must be something in me which prevents people, especially women, from being really intimate with me. To be able to make friends is a talent which I do not possess, and if those who call on me are prompted by kindness only, I would rather be without them. The only attraction towards me which I value is that which is irresistible. Perhaps I am wrong, and ought to accept with thankfulness whatever is left to me if it has any savour of goodness in it. I have no right to compare and to reject. . . . I provide myself with little maxims, and a breath comes and sweeps them away. What is per-

manent behind these little flickerings is black night: that is the real background of my life.

April 24th.—I have been to London, and on Easter Sunday I went to High Mass at a Roman Catholic Church. I was obliged to leave, for I was overpowered and hysterical. Were I to go often my reason might be drowned, and I might become a devotee. And yet I do not think I should. If I could prostrate myself at a shrine I should want an answer. When I came out into the open air I saw again the *plainness* of the world: the skies, the sea, the fields are not in accord with incense or gorgeous ceremonies. Incense and ceremonies are beyond the facts, and to the facts we must cleave, no matter how poor and thin they may be.

May 5th.—If I am ill, I shall depend entirely on paid service. God grant I may die suddenly and not linger in imbecility. So much of me is dead that what is left is not worth preserving. Nearly everything I have done all my life has been done for love. I shall now have to act for duty's sake. It is an entire reconstruction

of myself, the insertion of a new motive. I do not much believe in duty, nor, if I read my New Testament aright, did the Apostle Paul. For Jesus he would do anything. That sacred face would have drawn me whither the Law would never have driven me.

May 7th.—It is painful to me to be so completely set aside. When Tom was alive I was in the midst of the current of affairs. Few men, except Maxwell, come to the house now. My property is in the hands of trustees. Tom continually consulted me in business matters. I have nothing to look after except my house, and I sit at my window and see the stream of life pass without touching me. I cannot take up work merely for the sake of taking it up. Nobody would value it, nor would it content me. How I used to pity my husband's uncle, Captain Charteris! He had been a sailor; he had fought the French; he had been in imminent danger of shipwreck, and from his youth upwards perpetual demands had been made upon his resources and courage. At fifty he retired, a strong, active man; and having a religious turn, he helped the curate

with school-treats and visiting. He pined away and died in five years. The bank goes on. I have my dividends, but not a word reaches me about it.

October 10th.—Five months, I see, have passed since I made an entry in my diary. What a day this is! The turf is once more soft, the trees and hedges are washed, the leaves are turning yellow and are ready to fall. I have been sitting in the garden alone, reading the forty-ninth chapter of Genesis. I must copy the closing verses. It does me good to write them.

"And Jacob charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite, in the cave that is in the field of Machpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite for a possession of a burying-place. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah. The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children

of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed, and yielded up the ghost, and was gathered unto his people." There is no distress here: he gathers up his feet and departs. Perhaps our wild longings are unnatural, and yet it seems but nature *not* to be content with what contented the patriarch. Anyhow, wherever and whatever my husband and Sophy are I shall be. This at least is beyond dispute.

October 12th.—I do not wish to forget past joys, but I must simply remember them and not try to paint them. I must cut short any yearning for them.

October 20th.—We do not say the same things to ourselves with sufficient frequency. In these days of book-reading fifty fine thoughts come into our heads in a day, and the next morning are forgotten. Not one of them becomes a religion. In the Bible how few the thoughts are, and how incessantly they are repeated! If my life could be controlled by two or three divine ideas, I would burn my

library. I often feel that I would sooner be a Levitical priest, supposing I believed in my office, than be familiar with all these great men whose works are stacked around me.

October 22nd.—Sometimes, especially at night, the thought not only that I personally have lost Tom and Sophy, but that the exquisite fabric of these relationships, so intricate, so delicate, so highly organised, could be cast aside, to all appearance so wastefully, is almost unendurable. . . . I went up to the moor on the top of the hill this morning, where I could see, far away, the river broaden and lose itself in the Atlantic. I lay on the heather looking through it and listening to it.

October 23rd.—The 131st Psalm came into my mind when I was on the moor again. "Neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of its mother: my soul is even as a weaned child."

October 28th.—Tom once said to me that

reasoning is often a bad guide for us, and that loyalty to the silent Leader is true wisdom. Wesley, when he was in trouble, asked himself "whether he should fight against it by thinking, or by not thinking of it," and a wise man told him "to be still and go on." A certain blind instinct seems to carry me forward. What is it? an indication of a purpose I do not comprehend? an order given by the Commander-in-Chief which is to be obeyed although the strategy is not understood?

November 3rd.—Palmer, my maid, who has been with me ever since I began to keep house, was very good-looking at one-and-twenty. When she had been engaged to be married about a twelvemonth, she burned her face and the burn left a bad scar. Her lover found excuses for breaking off the engagement. He must have been a scoundrel, and I should like to have had him whipped with wire. She was very fond of him. She had an offer of marriage ten years afterwards, but she refused. I believe she feared lest the scar, seen every day, would make her husband loathe her. Her case is worse than mine, for she never knew such delights as mine.

She has subsisted on mere friendliness and civility. "Oh," it is suggested at once to me, "you are more sensitive than she is." How dare I say that? How hateful is the assumption of superior sensitiveness as an excuse for want of endurance!

November 4th.—Ellen Charteris, my husband's cousin, belongs to a Roman Catholic branch of the family, and is an abbess. I remember saying to her that I wondered that she and her nuns could spend such useless lives. She replied that although she and all good Catholics believe in the atonement of Christ, they also believe that works of piety in excess of what may be demanded of us, even if they are done in secret, are a set-off against the sins of the world. In this form the doctrine has not much to commend itself to me, and it is assumed that the nuns' works are pious. But in a sense it is true. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered." The fall of a grain of dust is recorded.

November 7th —A kind of peace occasionally visits me. It is not the indifference be-

gotten of time, for my husband and my child are nearer and dearer than ever to me. I care not to analyse it. I return to my patriarch. With Joseph before him, the father, who had refused to be comforted when he thought his son was dead, gathered up his feet into the bed and slept.

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN GEORGE LUCY, M.A., AND HIS GODCHILD, HERMIONE RUSSELL, B.A.

MY DEAR HERMIONE,—I have sent you my little volume of verse translations into English, and you will find appended a few attempts at Latin and Greek renderings of favourite English poems. You must tell me what you think of them, and you must not spare a single blunder or inelegance. I do not expect any reviews, and if there should be none it will not matter, for I proposed to myself nothing more than my own amusement and that of my friends. I would rather have thoroughly good criticism from you than a notice, even if it were laudatory, from a magazine or a newspaper. You have worked hard at your Latin and Greek

since we read Homer and Virgil, and you have had better instruction than I had at Winchester. These trifles were published about three months ago, but I purposely did not send you a copy then. You are enjoying your holiday deep in the country, and may be inclined to pardon that incurable old idler, your godfather and former tutor, for a waste of time which perhaps you would not forgive when you are teaching in London. Verse-making is out of fashion now. Goodbye. I should like to spend a week with you wandering through those Devonshire lanes if I could carry my two rooms with me and stick them in a field.

Affectionately,

G. L.

MY DEAR GODFATHER,—The little *Musæ* came safely. My love to you for them, and for the pretty inscription. I positively refuse to say a single syllable on your scholarship. I have deserted my Latin and Greek, and they were never good enough to justify me in criticising yours. I have latterly turned my attention to Logic, History, and Moral Philosophy, and with the help of my degree I have obtained

a situation as teacher of these sciences. I confess I do not regret the change. They are certainly of supreme importance. There is something to be learned about them from Latin and Greek authors, but this can be obtained more easily from modern writers or translations than by the laborious study of the originals. Do not suppose I am no longer sensible to the charm of classical art. It is wonderful, but I have come to the conclusion that the time spent on the classics, both here and in Germany, is mostly thrown away. Take even Homer. I admit the greatness of the Iliad and the Odyssey, but do tell me, my dear godfather, whether in this nineteenth century, when scores of urgent social problems are pressing for solution, our young people ought to give themselves up to a study of ancient legends? What, however, are Horace, Catullus, and Ovid compared with Homer? Much in them is pernicious, and there is hardly anything in them which helps us to live. Besides, we have surely enough in Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, and Milton, to say nothing of the poets of this century, to satisfy the imagination of anybody. Boys spend years over the *Metamor-*

phoses or the story of the wars of Æneas, and enter life with no knowledge of the simplest facts of psychology. I look forward to a time not far distant, I hope, when our whole pædagogic system will be remodelled. Greek and Latin will then occupy the place which Assyrian or Egyptian hieroglyphic occupies now, and children will be directly prepared for the duties which await them.

I have in preparation a book which I expect soon to publish, entitled *Positive Education*. It will appear anonymously, for society being constituted as it is, I am afraid that my name on the title-page would prevent me from finding employment. My object is to show how the moral fabric can be built up without the aid of theology or metaphysics. I profess no hostility to either, but as educational instruments I believe them to be useless. I begin with Logic as the foundation of all science, and then advance by easy steps (*a*) to the laws of external nature commencing with number, and (*b*) to the rules of conduct, reasons being given for them, with History and Biography as illustrations. One modern foreign language, to be learned as thoroughly as it is possible to learn it in this

country, will be included. I desire to banish all magic in school training. Everything taught shall be understood. It is easier, and in some respects more advantageous, not to explain, but the mischief of habituating children to bow to the unmeaning is so great that I would face any inconvenience in order to get rid of it. All kinds of objections, some of them of great weight, may be urged against me, but the question is on which side do they preponderate? Is it no objection to our present system that the simple laws most necessary to society should be grounded on something which is unintelligible, that we should be brought up in ignorance of any valid obligation to obey moral precepts, that we should be unable to give any account of the commonest physical phenomena, that we should never even notice them, that we should be unaware, for example, of the nightly change in the position of planets and stars, and that we should nevertheless busy ourselves with niceties of expression in a dead tongue, and with tales about Jupiter and Juno? For what glorious results may we not look when children from their earliest years learn that which is essential, but which now,

alas! is picked up unmethodically and by chance? I cannot help saying all this to you, for your *Musæ* arrived just as my youngest brother came home from Winchester. He was delighted with it, for he is able to write very fair Latin and Greek. That boy is nearly eighteen. He does not know why the tides rise and fall, and has never heard that there has been any controversy as to the basis of ethics.

Your affectionate godchild,

HERMIONE.

MY DEAR HERMIONE,—Your letter was something like a knock-down blow. I am sorry you have abandoned your old friends, and I felt that you intended to rebuke me for trifling. A great deal of what you say I am sure is true, but I cannot write about it. Whether Greek and Latin ought to be generally taught I am unable to decide. I am glad I learned them. My apology for my little *Musæ* must be that it is too late to attempt to alter the habits in which I was brought up. Remember, my dear child, that I am an old bachelor with seventy years behind me last Christmas, and remember also my natural limits. I am not so old, neverthe-

less, that I cannot wish you God-speed in all your undertakings.

Your affectionate godfather,

G. L.

MY DEAR GODFATHER,—What a blunderer I am! What deplorable want of tact! If I wanted your opinion on classical education, or my scheme I surely might have found a better opportunity for requesting it. It is always the way with me. I get a thing into my head, and out it comes at the most unseasonable moment. It is almost as important that what is said should be relevant as that it should be true. Well, the mistake is made, and I cannot unmake it. I will not trouble you with another syllable—directly at any rate—about Latin and Greek, but I do want to know what you think about the exclusion of theology and metaphysics from the education of the young. I must have *debate*, so that before publication my ideas may become clear and objections may be anticipated. I cannot discuss the matter with my father. You were at college with him, and you will remember his love for Aristotle, who, as I think, has enslaved him. If I may say so without offence,

you are not a philosopher. You are more likely, therefore, to give a sound, unprofessional opinion. You have never had much to do with children, but this does not matter; in fact, it is rather an advantage, for actual children would have distorted your judgment. What has theology done? It is only half-believed, and its rewards and punishments are too remote to be of practical service. They are not seen when they are most required. As to metaphysics, its propositions are too loose. They may with equal ease be affirmed or denied. Conduct cannot be controlled by what is shadowy and uncertain. We have been brought up on theology and metaphysics for centuries, and we are still at daggers drawn upon matters of life and death. We are as warlike as ever, and not a single social problem has been settled by bishops or professors. I wish to try a more direct and, as I believe, a more efficient method. I wish to see what the effect will be of teaching children from their infancy the lesson that morality and the enjoyment of life are identical; that if, for example, they lie, they lose. I should urge this on them perpetually, until at last, by association, lying would become impossible. Restraint

which is exercised in accordance with rational principles, inasmuch as it proceeds from Nature, must be more efficacious than an external prohibition. So with other virtues. I should deduce most of them in the same way. If I could not, I should let them go, assured that we could do without them. Now, my dear godfather, do open out to me, and don't put me off.

Your affectionate godchild,

HERMIONE.

MY DEAR HERMIONE,—You terrify me. These matters are really not in my way. I have never been able to tackle big questions. Unhappily for me, all questions nowadays are big. I do not see many people, as you know, and potter about in my garden from morning to night, but Mrs. Lindsay occasionally brings down her friends from London, and the subjects of conversation are so immense that I am bewildered. I admit that some people are too rich and others are too poor, and that if I could give you a vote you should have one, and that boys and girls might be better taught, but upon Socialism, Enfranchisement of Women, and Educational Reform, I have not a word to say. Is not this

very unsatisfactory? Nobody is more willing to admit it than I am. It is so disappointing in talking to myself or to others to stop short of generalisation and to be obliged to confess that *sometimes it is and sometimes it is not.* I bless my stars that I am not a politician or a newspaper writer. When I was young these great matters, at least in our village, were not such common property as they are now. A man, even if he was a scholar, thought he had done his duty by living an honest and peaceable life. He was justified if he was kind to his neighbours and amused himself with his bees and flowers. He had no desire to be remembered for any achievement, and was content to be buried with a few tears and then to be forgotten. All Mrs. Lindsay's folk want to do something outside their own houses or parishes which shall make their names immortal. . . . I was interrupted by a tremendous thunderstorm and hail. That wonderful rose-bush which, you will recollect, stood on the left-hand side of the garden door, has been stripped just as if it had been scourged with whips. If you have done, quite done with the Orelli you borrowed about two years ago, please let me have it. Why could you not

bring it? Mrs. Lindsay was saying only the other day how glad she should be if you would stay with her for a fortnight before you return to town.

Your affectionate godfather,

G. L.

MY DEAR GODFATHER,—I have sent back the Orelli. How I should love to come and to wander about the meadows with you by the river or sit in the boat with you under the willows. But I cannot, for I have promised to speak at a Woman's Temperance Meeting next week, and in the week following I am going to read a paper called "An Educational Experiment," before our Ethical Society. This, I think, will be interesting. I have placed my pupils in difficult historical positions, and have made them tell me what they would have done, giving the reasons. I am thus enabled to detect any weakness and to strengthen character on that side. Most of the girls are embarrassed by the conflict of motives, and I have to impress upon them the necessity in life of disregarding those which are of less importance and of prompt action on the stronger. I have

classified my results in tables, so that it may be seen at a glance what impulses are most generally operative.

But to go back to your letter. I will not have you shuffle. You can say so much if you like. Talk to me just as you did when we last sat under the cedar-tree. I *must* know your mind about theology and metaphysics.

Your affectionate godchild,

HERMIONE.

MY DEAR HERMIONE,—I am sorry you could not come. I am sorry that what people call a "cause" should have kept you away. If any of your friends had been ill; if it had been a dog or a cat, I should not have cared so much. You are dreadful! Theology and metaphysics! I do not understand what they are as formal sciences. Everything seems to me theological and metaphysical. What Shakespeare says now and then carries me further than anything I have read in the system-books into which I have looked. I cannot take up a few propositions, bind them into faggots, and say, "This is theology, and that is metaphysics."

There is much "discourse of God" in a May blossom, and my admiration of it is "beyond nature," but I am not sure upon this latter point, for I do not know in the least what φύσις or Nature is. We love justice and generosity, and hate injustice and meanness, but the origin of virtue, the life of the soul, is as much beyond me as the origin of life in a plant or animal, and I do not bother myself with trying to find it out. I do feel, however, that justice and generosity have somehow a higher authority than I or any human being can give them, and if I had children of my own this is what I should try, not exactly to teach them, but to breathe into them. I really, my dear child, dare not attempt an essay on the influence which priests and professors have had upon the world, nor am I quite clear that "shadowy" and "uncertain" mean the same thing. All ultimate facts in a sense are shadowy, but they are not uncertain. When you try to pinch them between your fingers they seem unsubstantial, but they are very real. Are you sure that you yourself stand on solid granite?

Your affectionate godfather,

G. L.

MY DEAR GODFATHER,—You are most disappointing and evasive. I gave up the discussion on Latin and Greek, but I did and do want your reply to a most simple question. If you had to teach children—you surely can imagine yourself in such a position—would you teach them *what are generally known as theology and metaphysics?*—excuse the emphasis. You have an answer, I am certain, and you may just as well give it me. I know that you had rather, or affect you had rather, talk about Catullus, but I also know that you think upon serious subjects sometimes. These matters cannot now be put aside. We live in a world in which certain problems are forced upon us and we are compelled to come to some conclusion upon them. I cannot shut myself up and determine that I will have no opinion upon Education or Socialism or Women's Rights. The fact that these questions are here is plain proof that it is my duty not to ignore them. You hate large generalisations, but how can we exist without them? They may never be entirely true, but they are indispensable, and, if you never commit yourself to any, you are much more likely to be practically wrong than if you use them.

Take, for example, the Local Veto. I admitted in my speech that there is much to be urged against it. It might act harshly, and it is quite true that poor men in large towns cannot spend their evenings in their filthy homes; but I *must* be for it or against it, and I am enthusiastically for it, because on the whole it will do good. So with Socialism. The evils of Capitalism are so monstrous that any remedy is better than none. Socialism may not be the direct course: it may be a tremendously awkward tack, but it is only by tacking that we get along. So with positive education, but I have enlarged upon this already. What a sermon to my dear godfather! Forgive me, but you will have to take sides, and do, please, be a little more definite about my book.

Your affectionate godchild,

HERMIONE.

MY DEAR HERMIONE,—I haven't written for some time, for I was unwell for nearly a month. The doctor has given me physic, but my age is really the mischief, and it is incurable. I caught cold through sitting out of doors after dinner with the rector, a good fellow if he

would not smoke on my port. To smoke on good port is a sin. He knows my infirmity, that I cannot sit still long, and he excuses my attendance at church. Would you believe it? When I was very bad, and thought I might die, I read Horace again, whom you detest. I often wonder what he really thought upon many things when he looked out on the

> "taciturna noctis
> signa."

Justice is not often done to him. He saw a long way, but he did not make believe he saw beyond his limit, and was content with it. A rare virtue is intellectual content!

> "Tu ne quæsieris, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi
> Finem dî dederint, Leuconoe, nec Babylonios
> Tentaris numeros."

The rector was telling me about Tom Pavenham's wedding. He has married Margaret Loxley, as you may perhaps have seen in the paper I sent you. Mrs. Loxley, her mother, was a Barfield, and old Pavenham, when he was a youth, fell in love with her. She was also in love with him. He was well-to-do, and farmed about seven hundred acres, but he was

not thought good enough by the elder Barfields, who lived in what was called a park. They would not hear of the match. She was sent to France, and he went to Buenos Ayres. After some years had passed he married out there, and she married. His wife died when her first child, a boy, was born. Loxley also died, leaving his wife with an only daughter. Pavenham retired from business in South America, and came back with his son to his native village, where he meant to spend the rest of his days. Tom and Margaret were at once desperately smitten with one another. The father and mother have kept their own flame alive, and I believe it is as bright as it ever was. It is delightful to see them together. They called on me with the children after the betrothal. 'He was so courteous and attentive to her, and she seemed to bask in his obvious affection. I noticed how they looked at one another and smiled happily as the boy and girl wandered off together towards the filbert walk. The rector told me that he was talking to old Pavenham one evening, and said to him: "Jem, aren't you sometimes sad when you think of what ought to have happened?" His voice

shook a bit as he replied gently: "God be thanked for what we have! Besides, it has all come to pass in Tom and Margaret."

You must not be angry with me if I say nothing more about Positive Education. It is a great strain on me to talk upon such matters, and when I do I always feel afterwards that I have said much which is mere words. That is a sure test; I must obey my dæmon. I wish I could give you what you want for what you have given me; but when do we get what we want in exchange for what we give? Our trafficking is a clumsy barter. A man sells me a sheep, and I pay him in return with my grandfather's old sextant. This is not quite true for you and me. Love is given and love is returned. À Dieu—not adieu. Remember that the world is very big, and that there may be room in it for a few creatures like

Your affectionate godfather,

G. L.

MRS. FAIRFAX

THE town of Langborough in 1839 had not been much disturbed since the beginning of the preceding century. The new houses were nearly all of them built to replace others which had fallen into decay; there were no drains; the drinking-water came from pumps; the low fever killed thirty or forty people every autumn; the Moot Hall still stood in the middle of the High Street; the newspaper came but once a week; nobody read any books; and the Saturday market and the annual fair were the only events in public local history. Langborough, being seventy miles from London and eight from the main coach-road, had but little communication with the outside world. Its inhabitants intermarried without crossing from other stocks, and men determined their choice mainly by equality of

fortune and rank. The shape of the nose and lips and colour of the eyes may have had some influence in masculine selection, but not much: the doctor took the lawyer's daughter, the draper took the grocer's, and the carpenter took the blacksmith's. Husbands and wives, as a rule, lived comfortably with one another; there was no reason why they should quarrel. The air of the place was sleepy; the men attended to their business, and the women were entirely apart, minding their household affairs and taking tea with one another. In Langborough, dozing as it had dozed since the days of Queen Anne, it was almost impossible that any woman should differ so much from another that she could be the cause of passionate preference.

One day in the spring of 1839 Langborough was stirred to its depths. No such excitement had been felt in the town since the run upon the bank in 1825, when one of the partners went up to London, brought down ten thousand pounds in gold with him by the mail, and was met at Thaxton cross-roads by a post-chaise, which was guarded into Langborough by three men with pistols. A circular printed in London

was received on that spring day in 1839 by all the respectable ladies in the town stating that a Mrs. Fairfax was about to begin business in Ferry Street as a dressmaker. She had taken the only house to be let in Ferry Street. It was a cottage with a front and back sitting-room, and belonged to an old lady in Lincoln, who inherited it from her brother, who once lived in it but had been dead forty years. Before a week had gone by four-fifths of the population of Langborough had re-inspected it. The front room was the shop, and in the window was a lay-figure attired in an evening robe of rose-coloured silk, the like of which for style and fit no native lady had ever seen. Underneath it was a card—"Mrs. Fairfax, Milliner and Dressmaker." The circular stated that Mrs. Fairfax could provide materials or would make up those brought to her by her customers.

Great was the debate which followed this unexpected apparition. Who Mrs. Fairfax was could not be discovered. Her furniture and the lay-figure had come by the waggon, and the only information the driver could give was that he was directed at the "George and Blue Boar"

in Holborn to fetch them from Great Ormond Street. After much discussion it was agreed that Mrs. Bingham, the wife of the wine merchant, should call on Mrs. Fairfax and inquire the price of a gown. Mrs. Bingham was at the head of society in Langborough, and had the reputation of being very clever. It was hoped, and indeed fully expected, that she would be able to penetrate the mystery. She went, opened the door, a little bell sounded, and Mrs. Fairfax presented herself. Mrs. Bingham's eyes fell at once upon Mrs. Fairfax's dress. It was black, with no ornament, and constructed with an accuracy and grace which proved at once to Mrs. Bingham that its maker was mistress of her art. Mrs. Bingham, although she could not entirely desert the linendraper's wife, whose husband was a good customer for brandy, had some of her clothes made in London when she stayed with her sister in town, and, to use her own phrase, "knew what was what."

"Mrs. Fairfax?"

A bow.

"Will you please tell me what a gown would cost made somewhat like that in the window?"

"For yourself, madam?"

"Yes."

"Pardon me; I am afraid that colour would not suit you."

Mrs. Bingham was a stout woman with a ruddy complexion.

"One colour costs no more than another?"

"No, madam: twelve guineas; that silk is expensive. Will you not take a seat?"

"I am afraid you will find twelve guineas too much for anybody here. Have you nothing cheaper?"

Mrs. Fairfax produced some patterns and fashion-plates.

"I suppose the gown in the window is your own make?"

"My own make and design."

"Then you are not beginning business?"

"I hope I may say that I thoroughly under stand it."

The door leading into the back parlour opened, and a little girl about nine or ten years old entered.

"Mother, I want——"

Mrs. Fairfax, without saying a word, gently led the child into the parlour again.

"Dear me, what a pretty little girl! Is that yours?"

"Yes, she is mine."

Mrs. Bingham noticed that Mrs. Fairfax did not wear a widow's cap, and that she had a wedding-ring on her finger.

"You will find it rather lonely here. Have you been accustomed to solitude?"

"Yes. That silk, now, would suit you admirably. With less ornament it would be ten guineas."

"Thank you: I must not be so extravagant at present. May I look at something which will do for walking? You would not, I suppose, make a walking-dress for Langborough exactly as you would have made it in London?"

"If you mean for walking about the roads here, it would differ slightly from one which would be suitable for London."

"Will you show me what you have usually made for town?"

"This is what is worn now."

Mrs. Bingham was baffled but not defeated. She gave an order for a walking-dress, and hoped that Mrs. Fairfax might be more communicative.

"Have you any introductions here?"

"None whatever."

"It is rather a risk if you are unknown."

"Perhaps you have been exempt from risks: some people are obliged constantly to encounter them."

"'Exempt,' 'encounter,'" thought Mrs. Bingham: "she must have been to a good school."

"When will you be ready to try on?"

"On Friday," and Mrs. Fairfax opened the door.

As Mrs. Bingham went out she noticed a French book lying on a side table.

The day following was Sunday, and Mrs. Fairfax and her daughter were at church. They sat at the back, and all the congregation turned on entering, looked at them, and thought about them during the service. They went out as soon as it was over, but Mrs. Harrop, wife of the ironmonger, and Mrs. Cobb, wife of the coal merchant, escaped with equal promptitude and were close behind them.

"There isn't a crease in that body," said Mrs. Harrop.

On Monday Mrs. Bingham was at the post-office. She took care to be there at the dinner

hour, when the postmaster's wife generally came to the counter.

"A newcomer, Mrs. Carter. Have you seen Mrs. Fairfax?"

"Once or twice, ma'am."

"Has she many letters?"

The door between the office and the parlour was open.

"I've no doubt she will have, ma'am, if her business succeeds."

"I wonder where she lived before she came here. It is curious, isn't it, that nobody knows her? Did you ever notice how her letters are stamped?"

"Can't say as I have, ma'am."

Mrs. Carter shut the parlour door. "The smell of those onions," she whispered to her husband, "blows right in here." She then altered her tone a trifle.

"One of 'em, Mrs. Bingham, had the Portsmouth postmark on it; but this is in the strictest confidence, and I should never dream of letting it out to anybody but you, but I don't mind you, because I know you won't repeat it, and if my husband was to hear me he'd be in a fearful rage, for there

was a dreadful row when I told Lady Caroline at Thaxton Manor about the letters Miss Margaret was getting, and it was found out that it was me as told her, and some gentleman in London wrote to the Postmaster-General about it."

"You may depend upon me, Mrs. Carter." Mrs. Bingham considered she had completely satisfied her conscience when she imposed an oath of secrecy on Mrs. Harrop, who was also self-exonerated when she had imposed a similar oath on Mrs. Cobb.

A fortnight after the visit to the post-office there was a tea-party. Mrs. Harrop, Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Sweeting, the grocer's wife, and Miss Tarrant, an elderly lady, living on a small annuity, but most genteel, were invited to Mrs. Bingham's. They began to talk of Mrs. Fairfax directly they had tasted the hot buttered toast. They had before them the following facts: the carrier's deposition that the goods came from Great Ormond Street; the lay-figure and what it wore; Mrs. Fairfax's prices; the little girl; the wedding-ring but no widow's weeds; the Portsmouth postmark; the French book; Mrs. Bingham's new gown, and lastly—a piece of infor-

mation contributed by Mrs. Sweeting and considered to be of great importance, as we shall see presently—that Mrs. Fairfax bought her coffee whole and ground it herself. On these facts, nine in all, the ladies had to construct—it was imperative that they should construct it—an explanation of Mrs. Fairfax, and it must be confessed that they were not worse equipped than many a picturesque and successful historian. At the request of the company, Mrs. Bingham went upstairs and put on the gown.

"Do you mind coming to the window, Mrs. Bingham?" asked Mrs. Harrop.

Mrs. Bingham rose and went to the window. Her guests also rose. She held her arms down and then held them up, and was surveyed from every point of the compass.

"I thought it was a pucker, but it's only the shadow," observed Mrs. Harrop.

Mrs. Cobb stroked the body and shook the skirt. Not a single depreciatory criticism was ventured. Excepting the wearer, nobody present had seen such a masterpiece. But although for half a lifetime we may have beheld nothing better than an imperfect actual, we recognise instantly the superiority and glory of the realised

Ideal when it is presented to us. Mrs. Harrop, Mrs. Cobb, Mrs. Sweeting, and Miss Tarrant became suddenly aware of possibilities of which they had not hitherto dreamed. Mrs. Swanley, the linendraper's wife, was degraded and deposed.

"She must have learned that in London," said Mrs. Harrop.

"London! my dear Mrs. Harrop," replied Mrs. Bingham, "I know London pretty well, and how things are cut there. I told you there was a French book on the table. Take my word for it, she has lived in Paris. She *must* have lived there."

"Where is Great Ormond Street, Mrs. Bingham?" inquired Mrs. Sweeting.

"A great many foreigners live there; it is somewhere near Leicester Square."

Mrs. Bingham knew nothing about the street, but having just concluded a residence in Paris from the French book, that conclusion led at once to a further conclusion, clear as noonday, as to the quality of the people who inhabited Great Ormond Street, and consequently to the final deduction of its locality.

"Did you not say, Mrs. Sweeting, that she

buys her coffee whole?" added Mrs. Bingham, as if inspiration had flashed into her. "If you want additional proof that she is French, there it is."

"Portsmouth," mused Mrs. Cobb. "You say, Mrs. Bingham, there are a good many officers there. Let me see—1815—it's twenty-four years ago since the battle. A captain may have picked her up in Paris. I'll be bound that, if she ever was married, she was married when she was sixteen or seventeen. They are always obliged to marry those French girls when they are nothing but chits, I've been told—those of them, leastways, that don't live with men without being married. That would make her about forty, and then he found her out and left her, and she went back to Paris and learned dressmaking."

"But he writes to her from Portsmouth," said Mrs. Bingham, who had not been told that the solitary letter from Portsmouth was addressed in a man's handwriting.

"He may not have broken with her altogether," replied Mrs. Cobb. "If he isn't a downright brute he'll want to hear about his daughter."

"Well," said Mrs. Sweeting, twitching her

eyes as she was wont to do when she was about to give an opinion which she knew would disturb any of her friends, "you may talk as you like, but the last thing Swanley made for me looked as if it had been to the wash and hung on me to dry. French or English, captain or no captain, I shall go to Mrs. Fairfax. Her character's got nothing to do with her cut. Suppose she *is* divorced; judging from that body of yours, Mrs. Bingham, I shan't have to send back a pelisse half a dozen times to get it altered. When it comes to that you get sick of the thing, and may just as well give it away."

Mrs. Sweeting occupied the lowest rank in this particular section of Langborough society. As a grocer Mr. Sweeting was not quite on a level with the coal dealer, who was a merchant, nor with the ironmonger, who repaired ploughs, and he was certainly below Mr. Bingham. Miss Tarrant, never having been "connected with trade"—her father was chief clerk in the bank—considered herself superior to all her acquaintances, but her very small income prevented her from claiming her superiority so effectively as she desired.

"Mrs. Sweeting," she said, "I am surprised at you! You do not consider what the moral effect on the lower orders of patronising a female of this kind will be, probably an abandoned woman. The child, no doubt, was not born in wedlock. We are sinners ourselves if we support sinners."

"Miss Tarrant," retorted Mrs. Sweeting, "I'm the respectable mother of five children, and I don't want any sermons on sin except in church. If it wasn't a sin of Swanley to charge me three guineas for that pelisse, and wouldn't take it back, I don't know what sin is."

Mrs. Bingham, although she was accustomed to tea-table disputes, and even enjoyed them, was a little afraid of Mrs. Sweeting's tongue, and thought it politic to interfere.

"I agree with you entirely, Mrs. Sweeting, about the inferiority of Mrs. Swanley to this newcomer, but we must consider Miss Tarrant's position in the parish and her responsibilities. She is no doubt right from her point of view."

So the conversation ended, but Mrs. Fairfax's biography, which was to be published under

authority in Langborough, was now rounded off and complete. She was a Parisian, father and mother unknown, was found in Paris in 1815 by Captain Fairfax, who, by her intrigues and threats of exposure, was forced into a marriage with her. A few years afterwards he had grounds for a divorce, but not wishing a scandal, consented to a compromise and voluntary separation. He left one child in her custody, as it showed signs of resemblance to its mother, to whom he gave a small monthly allowance. She had been apprenticed as a dressmaker in Paris, had returned thither in order to master her trade, and then came back to England. In a very little time, so clever was she that she learned to speak English fluently, although, as Mrs. Bingham at once noticed, the French accent was very perceptible. It was a good, intelligible, working theory, and that was all that was wanted. This was Mrs. Fairfax so far as her female neighbours were concerned. To the men in Langborough she was what she was to the women, but with a difference. When she went to Mr. Sweeting's shop to order her groceries, Mr. Sweeting, notwithstanding the canonical legend of her life, served her himself,

and was much entangled by her dark hair, and was drawn down by it into a most polite bow. Mr. Cobb, who had a little cabin of an office in his coal-yard, hastened back to it from superintending the discharge of a lighter, when Mrs. Fairfax called to pay her little bill, actually took off his hat, begged her to be seated, and hoped she did not find the last lot of coals dusty. He was now unloading some of the best Wallsend that ever came up the river, and would take care that the next half ton should not have an ounce of small in it.

"You'll find it chilly where you are living, ma'am, but it isn't damp, that's one comfort. The bottom of your street is damp, and down here in a flood anything like what we had fourteen years ago, we are nearly drowned. If you'll step outside with me I'll show you how high the water rose." He opened the door, and Mrs. Fairfax thought it courteous not to refuse. He walked to the back of his cabin bareheaded, although the morning was cold, and pointed out to her the white paint mark on the wall. She dropped her receipted bill in the black mud and stooped to pick it up. Mr. Cobb plunged after it and wiped it care-

fully on his silk pocket-handkerchief. Mrs. Cobb's bay window commanded the whole length of the coal-yard. In this bay window she always sat and worked and nodded to the customers, or gossiped with them as they passed. She turned her back on Mrs. Fairfax both when she entered the yard and when she left it, but watched her carefully. Mr. Cobb came into dinner, but his wife bided her time, knowing that, as he took snuff, the handkerchief would be used. It was very provoking, he was absent-minded, and forgot his usual pinch before he sat down to his meal. For three-quarters of an hour his wife was afflicted with painfully uneasy impatience, and found it very difficult to reply to Mr. Cobb's occasional remarks. At last the cheese was finished, the snuff-box appeared, and after it the handkerchief.

"A pretty mess that handkerchief is in, Cobb." She always called him simply "Cobb."

"Yes, it was an a-a-accident. I must have a clean one. I didn't think it was so dirty."

"The washing of your snuffy handkerchiefs costs quite enough as it is, Cobb, without using them in that way."

"What way?" said Mr. Cobb weakly.

"Oh, I saw it all, going out without your hat and standing there like a silly fool cleaning that bit of paper. I wonder what the lightermen thought of you."

It will already have been noticed that the question what other people thought was always the test which was put in Langborough whenever anything was done or anything happened not in accordance with the usual routine, and Mrs. Cobb struck at her husband's conscience by referring him to his lightermen. She continued—

"And you know what she is as well as I do, and if she'd been respectable you'd have been rude to her, as you generally are."

"You bought that last new gown of her, and you never had one as fitted you so well."

"What's that got to do with it? You may be sure I knew my place when I went there. Fit? Yes, it did fit; them sort of women, it stands to reason, are just the women to fit you."

Mr. Cobb was silent. He was a mild man, and he knew by much experience how unprofitable controversy with Mrs. Cobb was. He could not forget Mrs. Fairfax's stooping

figure when she was about to pick up the bill. She caused in all the Langborough males an unaccustomed quivering and warmth, the same in each, physical, perhaps, but salutary, for the monotony of life was relieved thereby and a deference and even a grace were begotten which did not usually distinguish Langborough manners. Not one of Mrs. Fairfax's admirers, however, could say that she showed any desire for conversation with him, nor could any direct evidence be obtained as to what she thought of things in general. There was, to be sure, the French book, and there were other circumstances already mentioned from which suspicion or certainty (suspicion, as we have seen, passing immediately into certainty in Langborough) of infidelity or disreputable conduct followed, but no corroborating word from her could be adduced. She attended to her business, accepted orders with thanks and smiles, talked about the weather and the accident to the coach, was punctual in her attendance at church, calm and inscrutable as the Sphinx. The attendance at church was, of course, set down to "business considerations," and was held to be quite consistent with the

scepticism and loose morality deducible from the French book and the unground coffee.

In speaking of the male creatures of the town we have left out Dr. Midleton. He was forty-eight years old, and had been rector twenty years. He had obtained high mathematical honours at Cambridge, and became a tutor in a grammar school, but was soon presented by his college with the living of Langborough. He was tall, spare, clean-shaven, grey-eyed, dark-haired, thin-faced, his lips were curved and compressed, and he stooped slightly. He was a widower with no children, and the Rectory was efficiently kept in order by an aged housekeeper. Tractarianism had not arisen in 1839, but he was High Church and an enemy to all kinds of fanaticism, apt to be satirical, even in his sermons, on the right of private judgment to interpret texts as it pleased in ignorance of Hebrew and Greek. He was respected and feared more than any other man in the parish. He had a great library, and had taken up archæology as a hobby. He knew the history of every church in the county, and more about the Langborough records than was known by

the town clerk. He was chairman of a Board of Governors charged with the administration of wealthy trust for alms and schools. When he first took office he found that this trust was controlled almost entirely by a man named Jackson, a local solicitor, whose salary as clerk was £400 a year and who had a large private practice. The alms were allotted to serve political purposes, and the headmaster of the school enjoyed a salary of £800 a year for teaching forty boys, of whom twenty were boarders. Mr. Midleton — he was Mr. Midleton then — very soon determined to alter this state of things. Jackson went about sneering at the newcomer who was going to turn the place upside down, and having been accustomed to interfere in the debates in the Board-room, interrupted the Rector at the third or fourth meeting.

"You'll get yourself in a mess if you do that, Mr. Chairman."

"Mr. Jackson," replied the Rector, rising slowly, "it may perhaps save trouble if I remind you now, once for all, that I am chairman and you are the clerk. Mr. Bingham, you were about to speak."

It was Dr. Midleton who obtained the new Act of Parliament remodelling the trust, whereby a much larger portion of its funds was devoted to education. Jackson died, partly from drink and partly from spite and vexation, and the headmaster was pensioned. The Rector was not popular with the middle class. He was not fond of paying visits, but he never neglected his duty, and by the poor was almost beloved, for he was careless and intimate in his talk with them and generous to real distress. Everybody admired his courage. The cholera in 1831 was very bad in Langborough, and the people were in a panic at the new disease, which was fatal in many cases within six hours after the first attack. The Rector through that dark time was untouched by the contagious dread which overpowered his parishioners, and his presence carried confidence and health. On the worst day, sultry, stifling, with no sun, an indescribable terror crept abroad, and Mr. Cobb, standing at his gate, was overcome by it. In five minutes he had heard of two deaths, and he began to feel what were called "premonitory symptoms." He carried a brandy flask in his pocket, brandy being then considered a remedy,

and he drank freely, but imagined himself worse. He was about to rush indoors and tell Mrs. Cobb to send for the surgeon, when the Rector passed.

"Ah, Mr. Cobb! I was just about to call on you; glad to see you looking so well when there's so much sickness. We shall want you on the School Committee this evening," and then he explained some business which was to be discussed. Mr. Cobb afterwards was fond of telling the story of this interview.

"Would you believe it?" said he. "He spoke to me about nothing much but the trust, but somehow my stomach seemed quieter at once. The sinking—just *here*, you know—was dreadful before he came up, and the brandy was no good. It was a something in his way that did it."

Dr. Midleton was obliged to call on Mrs. Fairfax as a newcomer. He found Mrs. Harrop there, and Mrs. Fairfax asked him to step into the back parlour, into which no one in Langborough had hitherto been admitted. Gowns were tried on in the shop, the door being bolted and the blind drawn. Dr. Midleton found four little shelves of books

on the cupboard by the side of the fireplace. Some were French, but most of them were English. Although it was such a small collection, his book-lover's instinct compelled him to look at it. His eyes fell upon a *Religio Medici*, and he opened it hastily. On the fly-leaf was written "Mary Leighton, from R. L." He had just time, before its owner entered, to replace it and to muse for an instant.

"Richard Leighton of Trinity: it is not a common name, but it cannot be he—have lost sight of him for years; heard he was married, and came to no good."

He was able to watch her for a minute as she stood by the table giving some directions to her child, who was sent on an errand. In that minute he saw her as she had not been seen by anybody in Langborough. To Mrs. Bingham and her friends Mrs. Fairfax was the substratum of a body and skirt, with the inestimable advantage over a substratum of cane and padding that a scandalous history of it could be invented and believed. To Langborough men, married and single, she was a member of "the sex," as women were called in those days, who possessed in a

remarkable degree the power of exciting that quivering and warmth we have already observed. Dr. Midleton saw before him a lady, tall but delicately built, with handsome face and dark brown hair just streaked with grey, and he saw also diffused over every feature a light which in her eyes, forward-looking and earnest, became concentrated into a vivid, steady flame. The few words she spoke to her daughter were sharply cut, a delightful contrast in his ear to the dialect to which he was accustomed, distinguished by its universal vowel and suppression of the consonants. How he inwardly rejoiced to hear the sound of the second "t" in the word "distinct," when she told her little messenger that Mr. Cobb had been "distinctly" ordered to send the coals yesterday. He remained standing until the child had gone.

"Pray be seated," she said. She went to the fireplace, leaned on the mantelpiece, and poked the fire. The attitude struck him. She was about to put some coals in the grate, but he interfered with an "Allow me," and performed the office for her. She thanked him simply, and sat down opposite to him, facing the light. She began the conversation.

"It is good of you to call on me; calling on people, especially on newcomers must be an unpleasant part of a clergyman's duty."

"It is so, madam, sometimes—there are not many newcomers."

"It is an advantage in your profession that you must generally be governed by duty. It is often easier to do what we are obliged to do, even if it be disagreeable, than to choose our path by our likes and dislikes."

The bell rang, and Mrs. Fairfax went into the shop.

"Who can she be?" said the Doctor to himself. Such an experience as this he had not known since he had been rector. Langborough did not deal in ideas. It was content to affirm that Miss Tarrant now and then gave herself airs, that Mrs. Sweeting had a way of her own, that Mr. Cobb lacked spirit and was downtrodden by his wife.

She returned and sat down again.

"You know nobody in these parts, Mrs. Fairfax?"

"Nobody."

"Yours is a bold venture, is it not?"

"It is—certainly. A good many plans were projected, of which this was one, and there were equal difficulties in the way of all. When that is the case we may almost as well draw lots."

"Ah, that is what I often say to some of the weaker sort among my parishioners. I said it to poor Cobb the other day. He did not know whether he should do this or do that. 'It doesn't matter much,' said I, 'what you do, but do something. *Do* it, with all your strength.'"

The Doctor was thoroughly Tory, and he slid away to his favourite doctrine.

"Our ancestors, madam, were not such fools as we often take them to be. They consulted the *sortes* or lots, and at the last election—we have a potwalloping constituency here—three parts of the voters would have done better if they had trusted to the toss-up of a penny instead of their reason."

Mrs. Fairfax leaned back in her chair. Dr. Midleton noticed her wedding-ring, and also a handsome sapphire ring. She spoke rather slowly and meditatively.

"Life is so complicated; so few of the con-

sequences of many actions of the greatest moment can be foreseen, that the belief in the lot is not unnatural."

"You have some books, I see—Sir Thomas Browne." He took down the volume.

"Leighton! Leighton! how odd! Was it Richard Leighton?"

"Yes."

"Really; and you knew him?"

"He was a friend of my brother."

"Do you know what has become of him? He was at Cambridge with me, but was younger."

"I have not seen him for some time. Do you mind if I open the window a little?"

"Certainly not."

She stood at the window for a moment, looking out on the garden, with her hand on the top of the sash. The Doctor had turned his chair a little and his eyes were fixed on her there with her uplifted arm. A picture which belonged to his father instantly came back to him. He recollected it so well. It represented a woman watching a young man in a courtyard who is just mounting his horse. We are every now and then

reminded of pictures by a group, an attitude, or the arrangement of a landscape which, thereby, acquires a new charm.

Suddenly the shop bell rang again, and Mrs. Fairfax's little girl rushed into the parlour. She had fallen down and cut her wrist terribly with a piece of a bottle containing some harts-horn which she had to buy at the druggist's on her way home from Mr. Cobb's. The blood flowed freely, but Mrs. Fairfax, unbewildered, put her thumb firmly on the wrist just above the wound and instructed the doctor how to use his pocket-handkerchief as a tourniquet. As he was tying it, although such careful attention to the operation was necessary, he noticed Mrs. Fairfax's hands, and he almost forgot himself and the accident.

"There is glass in the wrist," she said. "Will you kindly fetch the surgeon? I do not like to leave."

He went at once, and fortunately met him in his gig.

On the third day after the mishap Dr. Midleton thought he ought to inquire after the child. The glass had been extracted and she was doing well. Her mother was at work

in the back-parlour. She made no apology for her occupation, but laid down her tools.

"Pray go on, madam."

"Certainly not. I am afraid I might make a mistake with my scissors if I were to listen to you; or, worse, if I were to pay attention to them I should not pay attention to you."

He smiled. "It is an art, I should think, which requires not only much attention but practice."

She evaded the implied question. "It is difficult to fit, but it is more difficult to please."

"That is true in my own profession."

"But you are not obliged to please."

"No, not obliged, I am happy to say. If my parishioners do not hear the truth I have no excuse. It must be rather trying to the temper of a lady like yourself to humour the caprices of the vulgar."

"No; they are my customers, and even if they are unpleasant they are so not to me personally but to their servant, who ceases to be their servant when she ceases to be employed upon their clothes."

"You are a philosopher, madam; that sentiment is worthy of Epictetus."

"I have read Epictetus in Mrs. Carter's translation."

"You have read Epictetus? That is remarkable! I should think no other woman in the county has read him." He leaned forward a little and his face was lighted up. "I have a library, madam, a large library; I should like to show it to you, if—if it can be managed without difficulty."

"It will give me great pleasure to see it some day. It must be a delightful solace to you in a town like this, in which I daresay you have but few friends. I suppose, though, you visit a good deal?"

"No; I do not visit much. I differ from my brother Sinclair in the next parish. He is always visiting. What is the consequence?—gossip and, as I conceive, a loss of dignity and self-respect. I will go wherever there is trouble or wherever I am wanted, but I will not go anywhere for idle talk."

"I think you are right. A priest should not make himself cheap and common. He should be representative of sacred interests superior to the ordinary interests of life."

"I am grateful to you, madam, very grateful

to you for these observations. They are as just as they are unusual. I sincerely hope that we——" But there was a knock at the door.

"Come in." It was Mrs. Harrop.

"Your bell rang, Mrs. Fairfax, but maybe you didn't hear it as you were engaged in conversation. Good morning, Dr. Midleton. I hope I don't intrude?"

"No, you do not."

He bowed to the ladies, and as he went out, the parlour-door being open, he moved the outer door backwards and forwards.

"It would be as well, Mrs. Fairfax, to have a bell hung there which would act properly."

"I don't know quite what Dr. Midleton means," said Mrs. Harrop when he had gone. "The bell did ring, loud enough for most people to have heard it, and I waited ever so long."

He walked down the street with his customary firm step, and met Mr. Bingham who stopped him, half smiling and not quite at his ease.

"We are sorry, Doctor, you did not give Hutchings your vote for the almshouse last Thursday; we expected you would have gone with us."

"You expected? Why?"

"Well, you see, sir, Hutchings has always worked hard for our side."

"I am astonished, Mr. Bingham, that you should suppose that I will ever consent to divert the funds of a trust for party purposes."

Mr. Bingham, although he had just determined to give the Doctor a bit of his mind, felt his strength depart from him. His sentences lacked power to stand upright and fell sprawling. "No offence, Doctor, I merely wanted you to know—not so much my own views—difficulty to keep our friends together. Short—you know Tom Short—was saying to me he was afraid——"

"Pay no attention to fools. Good morning."

The Doctor came in that night from a vestry meeting to which he went after dinner. The clock was striking nine, the chimes played their tune, and as the last note sounded the housekeeper and servants filed into the study for prayers. Prayers over they rose and went out, and he sat down. His habits were becoming fixed and for some years he had always read in the evening the friends of his youth. No sermon was composed then; no

ecclesiastical literature was studied. Pope and Swift were favourites and, curiously enough, Lord Byron. His case is not uncommon, for it often happens that men who are forced into reserve or opposition preserve a secret, youthful, poetic passion and are even kept alive by it. On this particular evening, however, Pope, Byron, and Swift remained on his shelves. He meditated.

"A wedding-ring on her finger; no widow's weeds; he may nevertheless be dead—I believe I heard he was—and she has discontinued that frightful disfigurement. Leighton had the thickest crop of black hair I ever saw on a man: what thick, black hair that child has! A lady; a reader of books; nobody to be compared with her here." At this point he rose and walked about the room for a quarter of an hour. He sat down again and took up an important paper about the Trust. He had forgotten it and it was to be discussed the next day. His eyes wandered over it but he paid no attention to it; and somewhat disgusted with himself he went to bed.

Mrs. Fairfax had happened to tell him that she was fond of walking soon after breakfast

before she opened her shop, and generally preferred the lane on the west side of the Common. From his house the direct road to the lane lay down the High Street, but about a fortnight after that evening in his study he found himself one morning in Deadman's Rents, a narrow, dirty alley which led to the east side of the Common. Deadman's Rents was inhabited by men who worked in brickyards and coalyards, who did odd jobs, and by washerwomen and charwomen. It contained also three beershops. The dwellers in the Rents were much surprised to see the Doctor amongst them at that early hour, and conjectured he must have come on a professional errand. Every one of the Deadman ladies who was at her door—and they were generally at their doors in the daytime—vigilantly watched him. He went straight through the Rents to the Common, whereupon Mrs. Wiggins, who supported herself by the sale of firewood, jam, pickles, and peppermints, was particularly disturbed and was obliged to go over to the "Kicking Donkey," partly to communicate what she had seen and partly to ward off by half a quartern of rum the sinking

which always threatened her when she was in any way agitated. When he reached the common it struck him that for the first time in his life he had gone a roundabout way to escape being seen. Some people naturally take to side-streets; he, on the contrary, preferred the High Street; it was his quarter-deck and he paraded it like a captain. "Was he doing wrong?" he said to himself. Certainly not; he desired a little intelligent conversation and there was no need to tell everybody what he wanted. It was unfortunate, nevertheless, that it was necessary to go through Deadman's Rents in order to get it. He soon saw Mrs. Fairfax and her little girl in front of him. He overtook her, and she showed no surprise at seeing him.

"I have been thinking," said he, "about what you told me"—this was a reference to an interview not recorded. "I am annoyed that Mrs. Harrop should have been impertinent to you."

"You need not be annoyed. The import of a word is not fixed. If anything annoying is said to me, I always ask myself what it means—not to me but to the speaker. Besides, as I have told you before, shop insolence is nothing."

"You may be justified in not resenting it, but Mrs. Harrop cannot be excused. I am not surprised to find that she can use such language, but I am astonished that she should use it to you. It shows an utter lack of perception. Your Epictetus has been studied to some purpose."

"I have quite forgotten him. I do not recollect books, but I never forget the lessons taught me by my own trade."

"You have had much trouble?"

"I have had my share: probably not in excess. It is difficult for anybody to know whether his suffering is excessive: there is no means of measuring it with that of others."

"Have you no friends with whom you can share it?"

"I have known but one woman intimately, and she is now dead. I have known two or three men whom I esteemed, but close friendship between a woman and a man, unless he is her husband, as a rule is impossible."

"Do you really think so?"

"I am certain of it. I am speaking now of

a friendship which would justify a demand for sympathy with real sorrows."

They continued their walk in silence for the next two or three minutes,

"We are now near the end of the lane. I must turn and go back."

"I will go with you."

"Thank you: I should detain you: I have to make a call on business at the White House. Good morning."

They parted.

Dr. Midleton presently met Mrs. Jenkins of Deadman's Rents, who was going to the White House to do a day's washing. A few steps further he met Mr. Harrop in his gig, who overtook Mrs. Fairfax. Thus it came to pass that Deadman's Rents and the High Street knew before nightfall that Dr. Midleton and Mrs. Fairfax had been seen on the Common that morning. Mrs. Jenkins protested, that "if she was to be burnt alive with fuz-faggits and brimstone, nothink but what she witnessed with her own eyes should pass her lips, whatsomever she might think, and although they were a-walkin'—him with his arm round her waist—she did *not* see him a-kissin' of her—how

could she when they were a hundred yards off?"

The Doctor prolonged his stroll and reached home about half-past eleven. A third of his life had been spent in Langborough. He remembered the day he came and the unpacking of his books. They lined the walls of his room, some of them rare, all of them his friends. Nobody in Langborough had ever asked him to lend a single volume. The solitary scholar never forsook his studies, but at times he sighed over them and they seemed a little vain. They were not entirely without external effect, for Pope and Swift in disguise often spoke to the vestry or the governors, and the Doctor's manners even in the shops were moulded by his intercourse with the classic dead. Their names, however, in Langborough were almost unknown. He had now become hardened by constant unsympathetic contact. Suddenly a stranger had appeared who was an inhabitant of his own world and talked his own tongue. The prospect of genuine intercourse disclosed itself. None but those who have felt it can imagine the relief, the joyous expansion, which follow the discovery after long years of imprisonment

with dull, decent people of a person before whom it is unnecessary to stifle what we most care to express. No wonder he was excited!

But the stranger was a woman. He meditated much that morning on her singular aptitude for reflection, but he presently began to dream over figure, hair, eyes, hands. A picture in the most vivid colours painted itself before him, and he could not close his eyes to it. He was distressed to find himself the victim of this unaccustomed tyranny. He did not know that it is impossible for a man to love a woman's soul without loving her body. There is no such thing as a spiritual love apart from a corporeal love, the one celestial and the other earthly, and the spiritual love begets a passion peculiar in its intensity. He was happily diverted by Mr. Bingham, who called about a coming contested election for the governorships.

Next week there was another tea-party at Mrs. Cobb's. The ladies were in high spirits, for a subject of conversation was assured. If there had been an inquest, or a marriage, or a highway robbery before one of these parties, or if the contents of a will had just been

made known, or still better, if any scandal had just come to light, the guests were always cheerful. Now, of course, the topic was Dr. Midleton and Mrs. Fairfax.

"When I found him in that back parlour," said Mrs. Harrop, "I thought he wasn't there to pay the usual call. Somehow it didn't seem as if he was like a clergyman. I felt quite queer: it came over me all of a sudden. And then we know he's been there once or twice since."

"I don't wonder at your feeling queer, Mrs. Harrop," quoth Mrs. Cobb. "I'm sure I should have fainted; and what brazen boldness to walk out together on the Common at nine o'clock in the morning. That girl who brought in the tea—it's my belief that a young man goes after her—but even they wouldn't demean themselves to be seen at it just after breakfast."

"You don't mean to say as your Deborah encourages a man, Mrs. Cobb! I don't know what we are a-comin' to. You've always been so particular, and she seemed so respectable. I *am* sorry."

Mrs. Cobb did not quite relish Mrs. Harrop's pity.

"You may be sure, Mrs. Harrop, she was respectable when I took her, and if she isn't I shan't keep her. I *am* particular, more so than most folk, and I don't mind who knows it." Mrs. Cobb threw back her cap strings. The denial that she minded who knew it may not appear relevant, but desiring to be spiteful she could not at the moment find a better way of showing her spite than by declaring her indifference to the publication of her virtues. If there was no venom in the substance of the declaration there was much in the manner of it. Mrs. Bingham brought back the conversation to the point.

"I suppose you've heard what Mrs. Jenkins says? Your husband also, Mrs. Harrop, met them both."

"Yes he did. He was not quite in time to see as much as Mrs. Jenkins saw, and I'm glad he didn't. I shouldn't have felt comfortable if I'd known he had. A clergyman, too! it is shocking. A nice business, this, for the Dissenters."

"Well," said Mrs. Bingham, "what are we to do? I had thought of going to her and giving her a bit of my mind, but she has got that

yellow gown to make. What is your opinion, Miss Tarrant?"

"I would not degrade myself, Mrs. Bingham, by any expostulations with her. I would have nothing more to do with her. Could you not relieve her of the unfinished gown? Mrs. Swanley, I am sure, under the circumstances would be only too happy to complete it for you."

"Mrs. Swanley cannot come near her. I should look ridiculous in her body and one of Swanley's skirts."

"As to the Doctor," continued Miss Tarrant, "I wonder that he can expect to maintain any authority in matters of religion if he marries a dressmaker of that stamp. It would be impossible even if her character were unimpeachable. I am astonished, if he wishes to enter into the matrimonial state, that he does not seek some one who would be able to support him in his position and offer him the sympathy which a man who has had a University education might justifiably demand."

Mrs. Sweeting had hitherto listened in silence. Miss Tarrant provoked her.

"It's all a fuss about nothing, that's my

opinion. What has she done that you know to be wrong? And as to the Doctor, he's got a right to please himself. I'm surprised at you, Miss Tarrant, for *you've* always stuck for him through thick and thin. As for that Mrs. Jenkins, I'll take my Bible oath that the last time she washed for me she stunk of gin enough to poison me, and went away with two bits of soap in her pocket. *You* may credit what she says: *I* don't, and never demean myself to listen to her."

The ladies came to no conclusion. Mrs. Bingham said that she had suggested a round robin to Dr. Midleton, but that her husband decidedly "discountenanced the proposal." Within a fortnight the election of governors was to take place. There was always a fight at these elections, and this year the Radicals had a strong list. The Doctor, whose term of office had expired, was the most prominent of the Tory and Church candidates, and never doubted his success. He was ignorant of all the gossip about him. One day in that fortnight he might have been seen in Ferry Street. He went into Mrs. Fairfax's shop and was invited as before into the back parlour.

"I have brought you a basket of pears, and the book I promised you, the *Utopia*." He sat down. "I am afraid you will think my visits too frequent."

"They are not too frequent for me: they may be for yourself."

"Ah! since I last entered your house I have not seen any books excepting my own. You hardly know what life in Langborough is like."

"Does nobody take any interest in archæology?"

"Nobody within five miles. Sinclair cares nothing about it: he is Low Church, as I have told you."

"Why does that prevent his caring about it?"

"Being Low Church he is narrow-minded, or, perhaps it would be more correct to say, being narrow-minded he is Low Church. He is an indifferent scholar, and occupies himself with his religious fancies and those of his flock. He can reign supreme there. He is not troubled in that department by the difficulties of learning and is not exposed to criticism or contradiction."

"I suppose it is a fact of the greatest importance to him that he and his parishioners have

souls to be saved, and that in comparison with that fact others are immaterial."

"We all believe we have souls to be saved. Having set forth God's way of saving them we have done all we ought to do. God's way is not sufficient for Sinclair. He enlarges it out of his own head, and instructs his silly, ignorant friends to do the same. He will not be satisfied with what God and the Church tell him."

"God and the Church, according to Dr. Midleton's account, have not been very effective in Langborough."

"They hear from me, madam, all I am commissioned to say, and if they do not attend I cannot help it."

"I have read your paper in the Archæological Transactions on the history of Langborough Abbey. It excited my imagination, which is never excited in reading ordinary histories. In your essay I am in company with the men who actually lived in the time of Henry the Second and Henry the Eighth. I went over the ruins again, and found them much more beautiful after I understood something about them."

"Yes: exactly what I have said a hundred times: knowledge is indispensable."

"If you had not pointed it out, I should never have noticed the Early English doorway in the Chapter-house, so distinct in style from the Refectory."

"You noticed the brackets of that doorway: you noticed the quatrefoils in the head? The Refectory is later by three centuries, and is exquisite, but is not equal to the Chapter-house."

"Yes, I noticed the brackets and quatrefoils particularly. If knowledge is not necessary in order that we may admire, its natural tendency is to deepen our admiration. Without it we pass over so much. In my own small way I have noticed how my slight botanical knowledge of flowers by the mere attention involved increases my wonder at their loveliness."

There was the usual interruption by the shop-bell. How he hated that bell! Mrs. Fairfax answered it, closing the parlour door. The customer was Mrs. Bingham.

"I will not disturb you now, Mrs. Fairfax. I was going to say something about the black trimming you recommended. I really think red would suit me better, but, never mind, I will call again as I saw the Doctor come in. He is rather a frequent visitor."

"Not frequent: he comes occasionally. We are both interested in a subject which I believe is not much studied in Langborough."

"Dear me! not dressmaking?"

"No, madam, archæology."

Mrs. Bingham went out once more discomfited, and Mrs. Fairfax returned to the parlour.

"I am sure I am taking up too much of your time," said the Doctor, "but I cannot tell you what a privilege it is to spend a few minutes with a lady like yourself."

Mrs. Fairfax was silent for a minute.

"Mrs. Bingham has been here, and I think I ought to tell you that she has made some significant remarks about you. Forgive me if I suggest that we should partially, at any rate, discontinue our intercourse. I should be most unhappy if your friendship with me were to do you any harm."

The Doctor rose in a passion, planting his stick on the floor.

"When the cackling of the geese or the braying of the asses on Langborough Common prevent my crossing it, then, and not till then, will my course be determined by Mrs. Bingham and her colleagues."

He sat down again with his elbow on the arm of the chair and half shading his eyes with his hand. His whole manner altered. Not a trace of the rector remained in him: the decisiveness vanished from his voice; it became musical, low, and hesitating. It was as if some angel had touched him, and had suddenly converted all his strength into tenderness, a transformation not impossible, for strength is tenderness and tenderness is strength.

"I shall be forty-nine years old next birthday," he said. "Never until now have I been sure that I loved a woman. I was married when I was twenty-five. I had seen two or three girls whom I thought I could love, and at last chose one. It was the arbitrary selection of a weary will. My wife died within two years of her marriage. After her death I was thrown in the way of women who attracted me, but I wavered. If I made up my mind at night, I shrank back in the morning. I thought my irresolution was mere cowardice. It was not so. It was a warning that the time had not come. I resolved at last that there was to be no change in my life, that I would resign myself to my lot, expect no affection, and do

the duty blindly which had been imposed upon me. But a miracle has been wrought, and I have a perfectly clear direction: with you for the first time in my life I am *sure*. You have known what it is to be in a fog, unable to tell which way to turn, and all at once the cold, wet mist was lifted, the sun came out, the fields were lighted up, the sea revealed itself to the horizon, and your road lay straight before you stretching over the hill. I will not shame myself by apologies that I am no longer young. My love has remained with me. It is a passion for you, and it is a reverence for a mind to which it will be a perpetual joy to submit."

"God pardon me," she said after a moment's pause, "for having drawn you to this! I did not mean it. If you knew all you would forgive me. It cannot, cannot be! Leave me." He hesitated. "Leave me, leave me at once!" she cried.

He rose, she took his right hand in both of hers: there was one look straight into his eyes from her own which were filling with tears, a half sob, her hands after one more grasp fell, and he found that he had left the house. He went home. How strange it is to return to a

familiar chamber after a great event has happened! On his desk lay a volume of Cicero's letters. The fire had not been touched and was almost out: the door leading to the garden was open: the self of two hours before seemed to confront him. When the tumult in him began to subside he was struck by the groundlessness of his double assumption that Mrs. Fairfax was Mrs. Leighton and that she was free. He had made no inquiry. He had noticed the wedding-ring, and he had come to some conclusion about it which was supported by no evidence. Doubtless she could not be his: her husband was still alive. At last the hour for which unconsciously he had been waiting had struck, and his true self, he not having known hitherto what it was, had been declared. But it was all for nothing. It was as if some autumn-blooming plant had put forth on a sunny October morning the flower of the year, and had been instantaneously blasted and cut down to the root. The plant might revive next spring, but there could be no revival for him. There could be nothing now before him but that same dull duty, duty to the dull, duty without enthusiasm. He had no

example for his consolation. The Bible is the record of heroic suffering: there is no story there of a martyrdom to monotony and life-weariness. He was a pious man, but loved prescription and form: he loved to think of himself as a member of the great Catholic Church and not as an isolated individual, and he found more relief in praying the prayers which millions had prayed before him than in extempore effusions, humbly trusting that what he was seeking in consecrated petitions was all that he really needed. "In proportion as your prayers are peculiar," he once told his congregation in a course of sermons on Dissent, "they are worthless." There was nothing, though, in the prayer-book which met his case. He was in no danger from temptation, nor had he trespassed. He was not in want of his daily bread, and although he desired like all good men to see the Kingdom of God, the advent of that celestial kingdom which had for an instant been disclosed to him was for ever impossible.

The servant announced Mrs. Sweeting, who was asked to come in.

"Sit down, Mrs. Sweeting. What can I do for you?"

"Well, sir, perhaps you may remember—and if you don't, I do—how you helped my husband in that dreadful year 1825. I shall never forget that act of yours, Dr. Midleton, and I'd stick up for you if Mrs. Bingham and Mrs. Harrop and Mrs. Cobb and Miss Tarrant were to swear against you and you a-standing in the dock. As for that Miss Tarrant, there's that a-rankling in her that makes her worse than any of them, and if you don't know what it is, being too modest, forgive me for saying so, I do."

"But what's the matter, Mrs. Sweeting?"

"Matter, sir! Why, I can hardly bring it out, seeing that I'm only the wife of a tradesman, but one thing I will say as I ain't like the serpent in Genesis, a-crawling about on its belly and spitting poison and biting people by their heels."

"You have not yet told me what is wrong."

"Dr. Midleton, you shall have it, but recollect I come here as your friend: leastways I hope you'll forgive me if I call myself so, for if you were ill and you were to hold up your finger for me not another soul should come near you night nor day till you were well again or it had pleased God Almighty to take you to Himself. Dr. Midleton, there's a conspiracy."

"A what?"

"A conspiracy: that's right, I believe. You are acquainted with Mrs. Fairfax. To make a long and a short of it, they say you are always going there, more than you ought, leastways unless you mean to marry her, and that she's only a dressmaker, and nobody knows where she comes from, and they ain't open and free: they won't come and tell you themselves; but you'll be turned out at the election the day after to-morrow."

"But what do you say yourself?"

"Me, Dr. Midleton? Why, I've spoke up pretty plainly. I told Mrs. Cobb it would be a good thing if you were married, provided you wouldn't be trod upon as some people's husbands are, and I was pretty well sure you never would be, and that you knew a lady when you saw her better than most folk; and as for her being a dressmaker what's that got to do with it?"

"You are too well acquainted with me, Mrs. Sweeting, to suppose I should condescend to notice this contemptible stuff or alter my course to please all Langborough. Why did you take the trouble to report it to me?"

"Because, sir, I wouldn't for the world you

should think I was mixed up with them; and if my husband doesn't vote for you my name isn't Sweeting."

"I am much obliged to you. I see your motives: you are straightforward and I respect you."

Mrs. Sweeting thanked him and departed. His first feeling was wrath. Never was there a man less likely to be cowed. He put on his hat and walked to his committee-room, where he found Mr. Bingham.

"No doubt, I suppose, Mr. Bingham?"

"Don't know, Doctor; the Radicals have got a strong candidate in Jem Casey. Some of our people will turn, I'm afraid, and split their votes."

"Split votes! with a fellow like that! How can there be any splitting between an honest man and a rascal?"

"There shouldn't be, sir, but—" Mr. Bingham hesitated—"I suppose there may be personal considerations."

"Personal considerations! what do you mean? Let us have no more of these Langborough tricks. Out with it, Bingham! Who are the persons and what are the considerations?"

"I really can't say, Doctor, but perhaps you

may not be as popular as you were. You've—" but Mr. Bingham's strength again completely failed him, and he took a sudden turn—"You've taken a decided line lately at several of our meetings."

The Doctor looked steadily at Mr. Bingham, who felt that every corner of his pitiful soul was visible.

"The line I have taken you have generally supported. That is not what you mean. If I am defeated I shall be defeated by equivocating cowardice, and I shall consider myself honoured."

The Doctor strode out of the room. He knew now that he was the common property of the town, and that every tongue was wagging about him and a woman, but he was defiant. The next morning he saw painted in white paint on his own wall—

"My dearly beloved, for all you're so bold,
To-morrow you'll find you're left out in the cold;
And, Doctor, the reason you need not to ax,
It's because of a dressmaker—Mrs. F—fax."

He was going out just as the gardener was about to obliterate the inscription.

"Leave it, Robert, leave it; let the filthy scoundrels perpetuate their own disgrace."

The result of the election was curious. Two of the Church candidates were returned at the top of the poll. Jem Casey came next. Dr. Midleton and the other two Radical and Dissenting candidates were defeated. There were between seventy and eighty plumpers for the two successful Churchmen, and about five-and-twenty split votes for them and Casey, who had distinguished himself by his coarse attacks on the Doctor. Mr. Bingham had a bad cold, and did not vote. On the following Sunday the church was fuller than usual. The Doctor preached on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He did not allude directly to any of the events of the preceding week, but at the close of his sermon he said—"It has been frequently objected that we ought not to spend money on missions to the heathen abroad as there is such a field of labour at home. The answer to that objection is that there is more hope of the heathen than of many of our countrymen. This has been a nominally Christian land for centuries, but even now many deadly sins are not considered sinful, and it is an easier task to save the savage than to convince

those, for example, whose tongue, to use the words of the apostle, is set on fire of hell, that they are in danger of damnation. I hope, therefore, my brethren, that you will give liberally."

On Monday Langborough was amazed to find Mrs. Fairfax's shop closed. She had left the town. She had taken a post-chaise on Saturday and had met the up-mail at Thaxton cross-roads. Her scanty furniture had disappeared. The carrier could but inform Langborough that he had orders to deliver her goods at Great Ormond Street whence he brought them. Mrs. Bingham went to London shortly afterwards and called at Great Ormond Street to inquire for Mrs. Fairfax. Nobody of that name lived there, and the door was somewhat abruptly shut in her face. She came back convinced that Mrs. Fairfax was what Mrs. Cobb called "a bad lot."

"Do you believe," said she, "that a woman who gives a false name can be respectable? We want no further proof."

Nobody wanted further proof. No Langborough lady needed any proof if a reputation was to be blasted.

"It's an *alibi*," said Mrs. Harrop. "That's

what Tom Cranch the poacher did, and he was hung."

"An *alias*, I believe, is the correct term," said Miss Tarrant. "It means the assumption of a name which is not your own, a most discreditable device, one to which actresses and women to whose occupation I can only allude, uniformly resort. How thankful we ought to be that our respected Rector's eyes must now be opened and that he has escaped the snare! It was impossible that he could be permanently attracted by vice and vulgarity. It is singular how much more acute a woman's perception often is than a man's. I saw through this creature at once."

Eighteen months passed. The doctor one day was unpacking a book he had bought at Peterborough. Inside the brown paper was a copy of the *Stamford Mercury*, a journal which had a wide circulation in the Midlands. He generally read it, but he must have omitted to see this number. His eye fell on the following announcement—"On the 24th June last, Richard Leighton, aged 44 years." The notice was late, for the date of the paper was the

18th November. The next afternoon he was in London. He had been to Great Ormond Street before and had inquired for Mrs. Fairfax, but could find no trace of her. He now called again.

"You will remember," he said, "my inquiry about Mrs. Fairfax: can you tell me anything about Mrs. Leighton?" He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out five shillings.

"She isn't here: she went away when her husband died."

"He died abroad?"

"Yes."

"Where has she gone?"

"Don't know quite: her friends wouldn't have anything to do with her. She said she was going to Plymouth. She had heard of something in the dressmaking line there."

He handed over his five shillings, procured a substitute for next Sunday, and went to Plymouth. He wandered through the streets but could see no dressmaker's shop which looked as if it had recently changed hands. He walked backwards and forwards on the Hoe in the evening: the Eddystone light glimmered far away on the horizon; and the dim hope

arose in him that it might be a prophecy of success, but his hope was vain. It came into his mind that it was not likely that she would be there after dusk, and he remembered her preference for early exercise. The first morning was a failure, but on the second—it was sunny and warm—he saw her sitting on a bench facing the sea. He went up unobserved and sat down. She did not turn towards him till he said "Mrs. Leighton!" She started and recognised him. Little was spoken as they walked home to her lodgings, a small private house. On her way she called at a large shop where she was employed and obtained leave of absence until after dinner.

"At last!" said the doctor when the door was shut.

She stood gazing in silence at the dull red cinder of the dying fire.

"You put the advertisement in the *Stamford Mercury?*" he said.

"Yes."

"I did not see it until a day or two ago."

"I had better tell you at once. My husband, whom you knew, was convicted of forgery, and died at Botany Bay." Her eyes still watched the red cinders.

The Doctor's countenance showed no surprise, for no news could have had any power over the emotion which mastered him. The long, slow years were fulfilled. Long and slow and the fulfilment late, but the joy it brought was the greater. Youthful passion is sweet, but it is not sweeter than the discovery when we begin to count the years which are left to us, and to fear there will be nothing in them better than in those which preceded them that for us also love is reserved.

Mrs. Leighton was obliged to go back to her work in the afternoon, but she gave notice that night to leave in a week.

In a couple of months Langborough was astounded at the news of the Rector's marriage with a Mrs. Leighton whom nobody in Langborough knew. The advertisement in the *Stamford Mercury* said that the lady was the widow of Richard Leighton, Esq., and eldest daughter of the late Marmaduke Sutton, Esq. Langborough spared no pains to discover who she was. Mrs. Bingham found out that the Suttons were a Devonshire family, and she ascertained from an Exeter friend that Mr. Marmaduke Sutton was the son of an Honour-

able, and that Mrs. Leighton was consequently a high-born lady. She had married as her first husband a man who had done well at Cambridge, but who took to gambling and drink, and treated her with such brutality that they separated. At last he forged a signature and was transported. What became of his wife afterwards was not known. Langborough was not only greatly moved by this intelligence, but was much perplexed. Miss Tarrant's estimate of the Doctor was once more reversed. She was decidedly of opinion that the marriage was a scandal. A woman who had consented to link herself with such a reprobate as the convict must have been from the beginning could not herself have possessed any reputation. Living apart, too, was next door to divorce, and who could associate with a creature who had been divorced? No doubt she was physically seductive, and the doctor had fallen a victim to her snares. Miss Tarrant, if she had not known so well what men are, would never have dreamed that Dr. Midleton, a scholar and a divine, could surrender to corporeal attractions. She declared that she could no longer expect any profit from his ministrations, and that she

should leave the parish. Miss Tarrant's friends, however, did not go quite so far, and Mrs. Harrop confessed to Mrs. Cobb that "she for one wouldn't lay it down like Medes and Persians, that we should have nothing to do with a woman because her husband had made a fool of himself. I'm not a Mede nor a Persian, Mrs. Cobb. I say let us wait and see what she is like."

Mrs. Bingham was of the same mind. She dwelt much to herself on the fact that Mrs. Midleton's great-grandfather must have been a lord. She secretly hoped that as a wine merchant's wife she might obtain admission into a "sphere," as she called it, from which the other ladies in the town might be excluded. Mrs. Bingham already foretasted the bliss of an invitation to the rectory to meet Lady Caroline from Thaxton Manor; she already foretasted the greater bliss of not meeting her intimate friends there, and that most exquisite conceivable bliss of telling them afterwards all about the party.

Mrs. Midleton and her husband returned on a Saturday afternoon. The road from Thaxton cross-roads did not lie through the town: the

carriage was closed and nobody saw her. When they came to the rectory the Doctor pointed to the verse in white paint on the wall, "It shall be taken out," he said, "before to-morrow morning: to-morrow is Sunday." He was expected to preach on that day and the church was crammed a quarter of an hour before the service began. At five minutes to eleven a lady and child entered and walked to the rector's pew. The congregation was stupefied with amazement. Mouths were agape, a hum of exclamations arose, and people on the further side of the church stood up.

It was Mrs. Fairfax! Nobody had conjectured that she and Mrs. Leighton were the same person. It was unimaginable that a dressmaker should have had near ancestors in the peerage. It was more than a year and a half since she left the town. Mrs. Carter was able to say that not a single letter had been addressed to her, and she was almost forgotten.

A few days afterwards Mrs. Sweeting had a little note requesting her to take tea with the Rector and his wife. Nobody was asked to meet her. Mrs. Bingham had called the day before, and had been extremely apologetic.

"I am afraid, Mrs. Midleton, you must have thought me sometimes very rude to you."

To which Mrs. Midleton replied graciously, "I am sure if you had been it would have been quite excusable."

"Extremely kind of you to say so, Mrs. Midleton."

Mrs. Cobb also called. "I'll just let her see," said Mrs. Cobb to herself, and she put on a gown which Mrs. Midleton as Mrs. Fairfax had made for her.

"You'll remember this gown, Mrs. Midleton?"

"Perfectly well. It is not quite a fit on the shoulders. If you will let me have it back again it will give me great pleasure to alter it for you."

By degrees, however, Mrs. Midleton came to be loved by many people in Langborough. Mr. Sweeting not long afterwards died in debt, and Mrs. Sweeting, the old housekeeper being also dead, was taken into the rectory as her successor, and became Mrs. Midleton's trusted friend.

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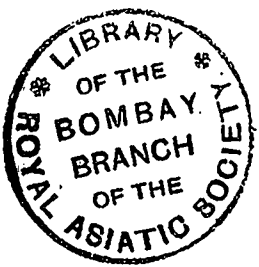

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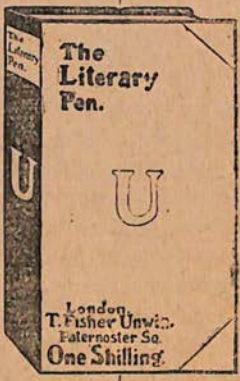

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